



Strangers in the Light

PHILONIC PERSPECTIVES ON
CHRISTIAN IDENTITY IN 1 PETER



TORREY SELAND

BRILL

STRANGERS IN THE LIGHT

Biblical Interpretation Series

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Strangers in the Light
*Philonic Perspectives on Christian Identity
in 1 Peter*

by

Torrey Seland



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Μὴ ἐγκαταλίπῃς φίλον ἀρχαῖον,
ὁ γὰρ πρόσφατος οὐκ ἔστιν ἔφισος αὐτῷ,
οἶνος νέος φίλος νέος:
ἐὰν παλαιωθῇ, μετ' εὐφροσύνης πίεσαι αὐτόν.

Sirach 9:10

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My scholarly career first brought me into studies of the early Christians as presented in the Lucan Acts of the Apostles; then to Philo of Alexandria, and then further back to the New Testament. The present work contains a collection of studies carried out in the last decade, dealing with issues both in the works of Philo, and in the New Testament as represented by the 1 Letter of Peter.

Three of the studies presented here have been previously published.¹ I am grateful to the Publishers for their acceptance of my request to reuse these works in the present volume. Two have been presented as papers at seminars and or conferences.² The first chapter is not previously published or made public in any other ways, but as it deals with one particular introductory question on the making of 1 Peter, it is included here.

All of the studies included have been written during my employment at Volda University College in Volda, Norway. I am grateful to my colleagues and members of our Research Seminar, the FAKK Forum, for their willingness to read some ‘obscure stuff’ from Philo, and for their discussions in the sessions of that seminar.

¹ Torrey Seland, “The ‘Common Priesthood’ of Philo and 1 Peter: A Philonic Reading of 1 Peter 2.5,9,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 57 (1995): 87–119; Torrey Seland, “πάροικος καὶ παρεπίδημος: Proselyte Characterizations in 1 Peter?” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 11.2 (2001): 239–68; Torrey Seland, ‘The Moderate Life of the Christian *paroikoi*: A Philonic Reading of 1 Pet 2:11,’ in *Philo und das Neue Testament Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen*. Hrg. Von Roland Deines und Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 172 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 241–264.

² Most of Chapter Four: ‘*The Moderate Life of the Christian Paroikoi: A Philonic reading of 1 Pet. 2:11*’ was read as a paper at a conference in Eisenach 1–4 May 2003 on ‘Philo and the New Testament—The New Testament and Philo’. Chapter Five: “*Conduct your selves honourably among the Gentiles*” (1 Pet 2:12): *Assimilation and Acculturation* was read as a seminar paper at Divinity College, University of Edinburgh, during my stay there as a Visiting Nordic Scholar in November 1998.

Words of thanks also go to the editors of the Biblical Interpretation Series who accepted this study for publication, to the staff at Brill Publishers, and to Anne Lise Barlaup, Volda, who kindly proofread Chapter One and Five and gave valuable suggestions.

Finally, I want to dedicate this book to two of my colleagues at Volda University College; Associate professor teol.dr. Birger Løvlie, and Professor Dr. philos. Per Magne Aadnanes; friends, colleagues and golf buddies. The experiences of having them as friends and as some of my closest colleagues have enriched and challenged my life in many ways. In recent times this cherished fellowship has also been extended to the local golf course. Fore!

Volda, March 2005
Torrey Seland

INTRODUCTION

STRANGERS IN THE LIGHT

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ; to the strangers of the Diaspora . . .”

“. . . that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 1:1; 2:9).

Descriptions as those given above, and similar characterizations of the Christians in 1 Peter have triggered the title chosen for the presentation of these studies: *Strangers in the Light*. To some people it may remind them of a once popular love-song.¹ Be that as it may, in the present context I suggest it is a very pertinent and fitting characterization of the conception of the readers inherent in 1 Peter. This letter presumes the readers live as Strangers in the Light; but though being strangers, they are not to hide but live as active participants in their local communities. That is, the author assumed that the readers were discernible in their local environments as Christians. Furthermore, in the present work I want to throw some more light on the author’s view of the intended readers by investigating somewhat further what it could possibly mean to the author that the Christians were to live as strangers in the light. Our focus thus strikes upon some very important characterizations of the Christians given in 1 Peter 1:1,17; 2:11: they are παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους: ‘strangers’ and ‘resident aliens,’ and have been called into the marvelous light of God. These characterizations have been the object for many studies in recent years, studies from which I have learned a lot. I have nevertheless come to see these descriptions

¹ I am here, of course, thinking about Frank Sinatra’s famous hit from 1966: *Strangers in the night*.

in a somewhat different light than most other scholars, and in this book I want to explore these issues and their implications somewhat further.

It is my thesis here that the author of 1 Peter considers his readers, the Christians in the Diaspora of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadokia, Asia and Bithynia (1:1), as living a life influenced by social circumstances very much comparable to those experienced in the Diaspora by proselytes to Judaism. Hence similar issues in Jewish Diaspora works can illuminate his descriptions and exhortations. Among these other Diaspora works, the works of Philo of Alexandria should be drawn into the discussions in a much more comprehensive way than has been done so far. The studies presented here will try to substantiate such a claim.²

In the mid-seventies of the twentieth century the 1 letter of Peter was characterized as “an exegetical step-child” in New Testament research.³ In the years to follow, the publication of many smaller and greater studies changed this situation drastically. 1 Peter became the object of a new interest in what it conveys, and what can be gained from its pages. And rightly so. 1 Peter is a challenging piece of work; it challenges and it inspires. Its characterizations of the readers as ‘strangers’ and ‘resident aliens’ have had an enormous influence on Christian thinking about their identity. This is evi-

² I might here mention one scholar who has voiced a view very close to mine, but who has not elaborated on it, nor drawn the works of Philo into his arguments. See Klaus Berger, *Theologieggeschichte des Urchristentums: Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 1994), 413: “Ganz konsequent stellt 1 Peter die neugewonnenen Heidenchristen als solche dar, die genau das zu erfahren haben, was Proselyten erleben, wenn sie zum Judentum übertreten. D.h.: Der Verfasser des 1 Peter ist Judenchrist, und er geht davon aus, dass das Schicksal der Heidenchristen dem von Proselyten entspricht. Das hat historisch gesehen einiges für sich. Obwohl die Christen nach 1 Peter schon einen eigenen Namen haben, werden sie doch offensichtlich als eine Art Juden betrachtet, und der Verfasser des 1 Peter lehrt sie, diese Identität zu bejahen. Die Adressaten sollen ihre Isolation annehmen und geistig vertiefen und “Fremdlinge” und “Beisassen” bleiben; damit wird die kulturelle Assimilation verhindert.”

³ John H. Elliott, “The Rehabilitation of an Exegetical Stepchild: 1 Peter in Recent Research,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 95 (1976): 243–54.

dent in church hymns,⁴ pastoral studies,⁵ and in historical studies.⁶

But it also confuses. Many scholars have claimed to solve its riddles, but only to later find that his or her work and viewpoints have been overturned and changed into almost the opposite.⁷ As is the case with any piece of literature or other relics from the past, 1 Peter mirrors its time. Its author obviously intended to deal with the situation of the early Christians of Asia Minor, especially the inner and eastern regions as stated in the introduction; the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. Hence the letter could be read as a possible witness of the conditions experienced by the people of that period and place. But already here 1 Peter also confuses. There are so many questions about the nature of this letter that seem to elude an answer; e.g., who were its author; when was it written; what knowledge can we presume the author did have of the social conditions addressed or presumed in the letter; how are the social issues inherent to be understood? The questions could easily be multiplied.

⁴ See the excursus in Reinhard Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde: Die Metapher der Fremde in der antiken Welt, im Urchristentum und im 1. Petrusbrief*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992), 211–18.

⁵ See e.g., Miroslav Volf, “Soft Difference. Theological Reflections on the Relation Between Church and Culture in 1 Peter,” *Ex Auditu* 10 (1994): 15–30; Russell G. Moy, “Resident Aliens of the Diaspora: 1 Peter and Chinese Protestants in San Francisco,” *Semeia* 90–91 (2002): 51–67, and Fika van Rensburg, “Christians as ‘Resident and Visiting Aliens.’ Implications of the Exhortations to the ‘Paroikoi’ and ‘Parepidemoi’ in 1 Peter for the Church in South Africa,” *Neotestamentica* 32 (1998): 573–84.

⁶ John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (London: SCM Press, 1981); Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*; Steven Richard Bechtler, *Following in His Steps. Suffering, Community, and Christology in 1 Peter*, SBL Dissertation Series 162 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998).

⁷ Some reviews of this research should here be mentioned: D. Sylva, “1 Peter Studies: The State of the Discipline,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 10 (1980): 155–63; D. Sylva, “A 1 Peter Bibliography,” *Journal of Theological Society* 25 (1982): 75–89; Dennis Sylva, “The Critical Exploration of 1 Peter,” in *Perspectives on First Peter*, edited by Ch. H. Talbert, Special Studies Services (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 17–36; Anthony Casurella, *Bibliography of Literature on First Peter*, New Testament Tools and Studies (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996).

It may be added that the research on 1 Peter also mirrors the changing interests of New Testament scholars. People of various times in history have found 1 Peter useful and interesting with regard to various questions and issues. Suffice it to be mentioned the interest the History of Religion scholars showed in the possible influence from its surrounding religions as e.g., the mysteries; at the end of the nineteenth century scholars searched for the possible and probable persecutions evidenced in 1 Peter; then the scholars of the period of form criticism exhibited a keen interest in the possible presence of liturgical material in 1 Peter, especially material associated with early Christian sermons and baptismal rituals. When the sociological methods and viewpoints made their early impact on New Testament studies in the late decades of the twentieth century, these methods and perspectives helped to bring 1 Peter out of its back-water situation,⁸ and several of the more recent New Testament studies demonstrate the present day concerns of research influenced by social anthropology and socio-rhetorical methods.⁹

The studies presented in this book also have their peers and preferences. In the present situation of “Metodenpluralismus” they try to interact with various viewpoints and methods. While on the one hand drawing on older views, they on the other hand try to enter into discussion with some of the more prominent views in vogue today. And, as will be demonstrated, they all try to make use of insights drawn from Diaspora-Jewish literature and the social concerns voiced in this literature. Furthermore, they have all their own history, and some have already been published as articles in vari-

⁸ Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*.

⁹ See e.g., W.L. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen, 1989); Lauri Thurén, *The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter with Special Regard to Ambiguous Expressions* (Åbo: Åbo Akademis Förlag, 1990); John H. Elliott, “Disgraced Yet Graced: The Gospel According to 1 Peter in the Key of Honor and Shame,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 25 (1995): 166–78; Barth L. Campbell, *Honor, Shame and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998).

ous journals in the last decade. They have, however, been somewhat reworked and adapted and adopted for the present book. This has been so much more possible as they all have several aspects in common. First, they all focus on particular social aspects inherent in 1 Peter; second, they all try to read aspects of the teachings of 1 Peter in light of a Diaspora situation, and with an eye in particular to comparable issues in the works of Philo of Alexandria; third, this procedure is possible and chosen because of several comparable interesting aspects of social location and social issues dealt with in both the works of Philo and 1 Peter. Admittedly, there have not been many studies published that deal so explicitly with a comparison of Philo and 1 Peter, though recent years have seen some in which Philo has been drawn upon in order to illuminate aspects of 1 Peter.¹⁰

Finally, I do consider the social world of the Diaspora Judaism to be most rewarding concerning studies of the social life and world of the early Christians. They did have much in common; not only were the first Christians mostly Jews; they also had the Hebrew Scriptures in the form of the Greek translation called the Septuagint (LXX) in common, and their social situations as minority groups in the societies of the Graeco-Roman world exhibited many comparable aspects. Their inter-group quarrels were indeed, as pointed out by Alan Segal, most often family affairs.¹¹ And the relations of the early Christian communities to the Graeco-Roman culture had clear parallels in the ways the Jewish communities had to interact with the very same cultural world. I hope the present work will demonstrate the usefulness of such a comparative reading.

1 Peter has been characterized as a Diaspora letter.¹² We have great sympathy for such a characterization. It is most probably written for a Diaspora situation, to readers located in the Diaspora (1,1). Anyway, the *first chapter*, entitled *The Making of 1 Peter*, repre-

¹⁰ Cf. here e.g., Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*.

¹¹ Alan Segal, *Rebecca's Children* (Cambridge, 1987).

¹² According to Ramsey Michaels, it is "a diaspora letter to 'Israel.'" See

sents a more traditional reading into the making of 1 Peter in light of ancient Graeco-Roman ways of writing, propagating and transmitting letters. Hence it not only deals with how letters were written, but also what we can say about possible ways of getting a letter to its intended readers. I draw in particular upon what recent research has worked out as a plausible scenario of how other ancient books were produced and transmitted. In the case of 1 Peter I find the role of Silvanus (5:12), and the order of the areas of destination as given in 1:1 important issues to be discussed.

The three following chapters ask more explicitly about what can be deduced about the ideology of Christian life—as set forth in 1 Peter 2:5–11—from a comparative reading of other Diaspora Jewish literature, especially the works of Philo. I here try to carry out a particular reading of these issues in 1 Peter, constructing a so-called expert reader called a ‘Philonic reader’. I imagine a reader well versed in the works of Philo of Alexandria, and try to work out how he or she would read the issues inherent in 1 Peter. I do not suggest any direct connection between the author of 1 Peter and Philo’s works, but I do work from the hypothesis that Philo’s works represent important viewpoints and attitudes that also can illuminate our reading of 1 Peter. Hence I here to some extent perform what I would call a ‘Philonic’ reading of some sections and aspects of 1 Peter. Again Ramsey Michaels has formulated a view that is very compatible to mine, though I would emphasize the ‘proselytes’, not the ‘Jews’ here:

1 Peter is linked to Judaism not by the law, but by a shared self-understanding. The author sees himself and his readers as a community situated in the world in much the same way the Jews are situated, and sharing with the Jews a common past. This tendency—

J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, Texas, 1988). See also his J. Ramsey Michaels, “Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic Letters: 1 Peter, Revelation, and 2 Baruch 78–87,” in *Society of Biblical Literature 1987 Seminar Papers*, edited by Kent Harold Richards (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1987), 268–75.

whether we call it “judaizing” or “philosemitic”—is based on the hearing and acceptance of certain Jewish stories, both biblical and extrabiblical: about prophets and their visions (1 Peter 1:10–12), about evil spirits (3:19) and angels (1:12; 3:22), about Noah and his companions (3:20), about Sarah and Abraham (3:6) and all the righteous dead who believed God’s message and were condemned for it (4:6), but most of all about Jesus the Jewish Messiah (2:21–25; 3:18–19, 22). The last of these stories was what convinced many Gentile Christians that all the other stories—and more—were theirs as well. The Jewish past became their past.

The first of these three chapters, the *second chapter* in the present book, deals with two very much discussed terms in 1 Peter; the role of the central descriptions of the readers as *παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους* (1,1.17; 2,11). It is here suggested that these terms should be understood as proselyte terms, and the study tries to illuminate their role in 1 Peter as social descriptions in light of Diaspora Jewish conceptions of proselytes as particularly found in the works of Philo of Alexandria.

The *third chapter* then picks up a topic very much discussed some years ago, the issue of a ‘common priesthood’, or the ‘priesthood of believers’ or of ‘the faithful’ as it is also called. I try to work out how a Philonic reader would read the issues of priesthood contained in 1 Peter 2,5+9 in light of the Philonic symbolic universe. To do so, I first work out the views of Philo on issues as the priesthood, High Priest and temple, and then deal with the texts of 1 Peter.

The *fourth chapter* deals with the possible Philonic understanding of the psychological and ethical issues contained in 1 Peter 2:11 in its focus on the struggle of the soul against the body.

Then finally, the *fifth and last chapter or study*, partly building on the results of the preceding studies, can be read as summing up and applying several of the aspects dealt with so far. Its focus is on the author’s view of the social conditions of the intended readers of 1 Peter in light of models on assimilation and acculturation. Modern conceptions as ‘assimilation’ and ‘acculturation’ are sometimes used in New Testament studies to characterize the readers’ social situation, but most often without considering the models associated with

such terms. Hence I first deal with recent social science research concerning assimilation and acculturation, and then applies the model of Milton M. Gordon in a reading of these issues as represented by the text of 1 Peter. In doing this, I am able to draw on several of the results worked out in the preceding studies, hence demonstrating the inter-relationships of the present studies.

These studies thus have several aspects in common. While they admittedly might be read separately, they all more or less contain the following issues:

- they all try to apply insights from social studies of the Graeco-Roman world,
- they all try in particular to focus on the insights drawn from studies of the Jewish Diaspora. This is especially prominent in the second, third and fourth study,
- several of the studies in this book apply insights from the works of Philo of Alexandria.

Hence I here offer these studies in order to demonstrate that questions of identity were central issues to the author of the letter, and that by drawing on the Diaspora literature, and especially the works of Philo, one may get a better understanding of what issues the author set out to solve.

CHAPTER ONE

THE MAKING OF 1 PETER IN LIGHT OF
ANCIENT GRAECO-ROMAN LETTERWRITING
AND DISTRIBUTION

Introduction

In most introductions to the first letter of Peter, the issues of authorship and date are dealt with: How are we to understand the reference to Peter in the letter? Was he the real author, or is he a symbol of authority for the writer(s) only, possibly a Petrine group or school? When was it written? Such questions have hardly reached a final verdict yet. But in the present study I will not, however, deal so much with the issue of authorship as such as with the question: who wrote it; that is, who actually penned it? My ways of discussing this issue are not dependent on my view of the possible authorship of Peter. Neither is my quest for the procedures of ‘Silvanus’ as an amanuensis dependent on the identity of the ‘historical Silvanus’ as such. I am more interested in the plausible historical procedures implied in the making of such a letter as 1 Peter, and in what can be drawn from the information given in 1:1 and 5:12 about the actual production of it.

In the introductory verses in 1 Peter the location of the addressees is given as “Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,” and in its closing remarks in 5:12 it is stated that “By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly.” How is this information to be understood? What does the mentioning of the several places mean: was the letter sent by the author and carried to all of these places by one and the same person? Does it probably even designate his travel route as some have suggested?¹

¹ C.J. Hemer, “The Address of 1. Peter,” *Expository Times* 89 (1977/78): 239–43.

Or was perhaps the letter sent in several copies at the same time to the various regions mentioned in its introduction? And what part did Silvanus play in the production and propagation of the letter? Did he function as a secretary or a letter carrier or both?

The brief information provided by the introductory and concluding sections thus raise several questions. It is my thesis here that both the description of Silvanus in 5:12, and the vast areas of destination of the letter (1:1) should be read as indicating that Silvanus was the writer/secretary, but not the courier of the letter. This view will also have some corollaries for our discussion of how to understand some expressions used in the letter. Before I discuss these issues further, however, I will provide a scenario of how comparable letters usually were produced and distributed in the Graeco-Roman world. I will not consider the way the content might be structured by way of rhetorical features and strategies, but focus on the issues of how such a letter might be written and then transmitted to its destination(s) in the Graeco-Roman world at that time.

A Scenario of Letter production in the Graeco-Roman World

We have many and various letters preserved from the years before and after the first century CE. These range from commercial letters consisting of only a few lines to literary letters of several pages. With the exception of the letter to Philemon, Paul's letters represent the longest and most extensive ones preserved. 1 Peter is by comparison more similar to the other Graeco-Roman letters. Among the most prolific writers of antiquity was Cicero (106–43 BCE), the famous Roman senator, who is said to have written ca. 6000 letters, among which 931 are still preserved. Of the correspondence of Pliny the younger (62–ca. 113 CE) we also have several letters. 358 of his letters were published arranged in 9 collections.²

² David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, edited by Wayne A. Meeks, Library of Early Christianity (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987), 171–72.

There is no consensus today, however, on how to categorize the various letter types.³ D.E. Aune distinguishes between private or documentary letters, official letters, and literary letters.⁴ Private letters represent the common letter tradition of antiquity, and “functioned mainly to maintain contact with family and friends, to announce information and to request information or favours.”⁵ Official letters were written from a governmental official to others in an official capacity, and literary letters were presented and transmitted through literary channels. The latter ones could be real as well as fictional letters or letter essays. Aune suggests that the very length of the New Testament letters encourages a comparison with the literary and official letters of antiquity.⁶ Hence the many private letters represented by thousands of papyri fragments available to us today are not the only type relevant for understanding the New Testament letters. Neither Paul’s letters, nor 1–2 Peter, were mainly private letters. Due to the large geographical areas of the addressees, 1 Peter is probably to be understood as an encyclical letter,⁷ sent from a person in a certain official role as an elder (5:1: ‘as a fellow elder’) to the Christian communities in the regions of “Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.” Accordingly, literary letters of various kinds are also relevant in understanding the making of an encyclical letter as 1 Peter.

³ Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, edited by Wayne A. Meeks, Library of Early Christianity (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 49ff works with categories as “Letters of Friendship, Family Letters, Letters of Praise and Blame, Letters of Exhortation and Advice, Letters of Mediation,” and “Accusing, Apologetic and Accounting Letters”. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, 162 would rather group them as “private or documentary letters, official letters, and literary letters.” But both authors emphasize that there are many overlappings and cases of composite letters. See here also Hans-Josef Klauck, *Die antike Briefliteratur und das Neue Testament. Ein Lehr- und Arbeitsbuch*, Uni-Taschenbücher 2022 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1998), 71ff.

⁴ Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, 162–68.

⁵ Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, 162.

⁶ Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, 160; Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, 18–25.

⁷ See Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, 221–22.

How then did such letters come into existence?⁸ At this time only about 10–20% of the population could read and write.⁹ Among the elite population, however, most persons were probably competent of both reading and writing. But both those able and those unable to read/write had the option of using a secretary. Secretaries were easily obtainable; in the agora several offered their services, but the price would probably be an obstacle for many of those not belonging to the elite circles.

Both Cicero, Plinius, and, e.g., the apostle Paul, could write their own letters. But in many cases they also used secretaries. It is important to know the relations between author and secretary to understand the process of letter-writing in antiquity.¹⁰ A secretary could write a letter as the author dictated it: it could be dictated syllable for syllable, or at more regular speech speed. In the latter case the secretary could write in short hand, or he could take short notes and write them out later. The secretary could also work as a kind of editor; the author e.g., made a speech, and the secretary wrote down the main gist, and expanded this into a publication. He could also, in fact, function as a kind of co-author, being given only the main ideas of the letter, and then compose the full-blown letter. As the writers in antiquity often used many stereotype topoi and phrases—even topics could indeed to a certain degree be stylized—being given the main gist of the letter could be enough for a clever secretary to compose a letter suitable to its author. But the author usually checked the contents, and regardless of what methods were used by the secretary in writing down the text, the real author was responsible for the end product.

⁸ Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1995).

⁹ Cf. William Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989). But see also some modifications in Mary Beard, ed., *Literacy in the Ancient World*, Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 3 (Ann Arbor, Mi, 1991).

¹⁰ E.R. Richards, The Secretary in the Letters of Paul, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2 Reihe* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991); Gordon J. Bahr, "Paul and Letter Writing in the Fifth (TS: First) Century," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 28 (1966): 465–77.

Letters written by a secretary often contained hints revealing his presence:¹¹ it could be in a form of an epilogue in which the author mentioned the secretary, and/or there could be differences in the handwriting in the original manuscript. In some cases the secretary could even mention his presence: if he wrote because of the author's inability to write, this fact was often mentioned in the text. Or the secretary could write his own personal greeting at the end of the letter (cf. Romans 16:11). This latter procedure, however, was not very common.

When a literary work had been written, the author sometimes discussed its features with some of his friends. Pliny the younger tells us that he on several occasions gathered some friends when he had written something he would like to publish in some form. His Letter V,12 to Terentius Scaurus describes such a situation:¹²

Designing to recite a little speech which I think of publishing, I invited an audience, sufficient to inspire me with diffidence, though at the same time small enough to secure my hearing the truth of their sentiments. . . . I made a fair copy of the piece which I now send you. I beg you would sincerely tell me your sentiments of the whole, and of its several parts. I shall be more cautious to suppress or bold to publish it, as your judgment shall decide either way.

He could also send a draft to a friend for suggestions. Pliny's Letter I, viii, written to his friend Pompeius Saturninus, illustrates this method: "... but now I beg of you, not only to take a view of it in the whole, but distinctly to criticize it, with all your exactness, in all its parts. When you have corrected it, I shall still be at liberty to publish or suppress it" ("Erit enim et post emendationem liberum nobis vel publicare vel continere").

We see here that it was not unusual for an author to let other persons read—or be read to—a literary work before it was published.

¹¹ Richards, E.R., *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, 68–80.

¹² See also Letter I,8; IV,7. On Pliny and his letters, see further A.N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny: A Historical and Social Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966).

Such a reading or hearing could then lead to a reconsidering of the work by its author; it could be corrected, abbreviated or expanded. Such a testing always took place among friends. No available sources demonstrate that an author ever sought such advice from a stranger.¹³ This is due to the prevailing values of honor and shame;¹⁴ it was an honor to be given such a hearing, and no author would deliberately expose himself to criticism from a stranger. Evaluation and criticism were an inside group affair.

After the writing, whether a letter or a greater work of literature, had been given the wanted evaluation and possible revision, the author could expand on the circle of persons given access to it. It could be copied and given as a gift to a friend, perhaps not at least one who could be expected to provide for further copying and propagation. The system of patronage was very important in the process of publishing such a work (cf. Luke 1:1–3).

In the first century CE little or no commercial activity of publishers were involved in this process of production, and the author did not get any pecuniary benefit from his literary production.¹⁵ Furthermore, when an author had given his work to someone else, he or she had in fact also given away any claim to copyrighting.¹⁶ He could, when issuing a work, himself provide for its further copying; but most often this task was carried out by a friend or a patron, or it was up to any individual who got hold of it to make further copies. The author had no further control over who got hold of the work or who copied it. This procedure is also one of the reasons for the many differences and scribal variations in the texts available to us

¹³ R.J. Starr, "The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World," *Classical Quarterly* 37 (1987): 213–23, esp. 213–15.

¹⁴ On the role of honor and shame, see e.g., Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta, 1981), 25–50.

¹⁵ Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*, 83–93; Starr, "The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World," 215ff.

¹⁶ K. Dziatzko, "Autor- und Verlagsrecht im Altertum," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 49 (1894): 559–76; B. van Groningen, "Ekdosis," *Mnemosyne* 16 (1963): 1–17.

today, and has led to the text critical apparatus of our present editions of ancient works as the New Testament.¹⁷

The possible existence of publishers and bookstores has been much discussed in current research.¹⁸ The presence of a certain Pomponius Atticus in several of Cicero's letters and the role assigned to him in propagating Cicero's letters have made many consider him a publisher. This reading has been convincingly demolished, however, by R. Sommer over 70 years ago.¹⁹ Atticus more probably was a rich friend, one of 'the nouveaux riches' in Rome, who had literary interests, and functioned as a promoter and propagator of Cicero's works. And Cicero, being the primary of these two, obviously took advantage of his friend's willingness to promote his fame and honor.

At the beginning of the second century CE, however, Pliny seems to have heard about a kind of publisher (bibliopola) even in Lyons. He writes to a friend that he did not imagine there were book-sellers at Lyons ("bibliopolas Lugduni esse non putabam"), but he was so much more "pleased to hear that my volumes are sold there ('venditari libellas meus')". The paucity of such references available, and the briefness of their content, makes it very difficult to assess

¹⁷ On the scribal tendencies, see James R. Royse, "Scribal Tendencies in the Transmission of the Text of the New Testament," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research. Essays on the Status Questiones*, edited by Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes, Studies and Documents 46 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 239–52.

¹⁸ As to the older works, or works propagating the older view, see Theodor Birt, *Das Antike Buchwesen*, Unveränderter Nachdruck 1959 Scientia Aalen (Berlin: W. Hertz, 1882); Tonnes Kleberg, *Bokhandel och bokförlag i antiken* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962); W. Schubart, *Das Buchwesen bei der Griechen und Römern* (1921); Hans Widmann, "Herstellung und Vertrieb des Buches in der griechisch-römischen Welt," *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 8 (1967): 545–641 These scholars are often accused of reading the ancient sources in light of the practice of modern publishing houses. For a more congenial reading, see now Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*; H. Blank, *Das Buch in der Antike* (Munich: Beck, 1992).

¹⁹ R. Sommer, "T. Pomponius Atticus und Verbreitung von Ciceros Werken," *Hermes* 61 (1926): 389–422.

the nature and role of such bibliopola at this time. Accordingly it seems to be the common scholarly opinion today that our sources from the Graeco-Roman times do not unequivocally support the idea that there were commercial bookstores before the end of the first Century CE.²⁰

Hence one was dependent upon one's network of friends and friends of friends when it came to getting access to recently published works. Copying could be rather expensive. There were probably no publishers available comparable to those of our time, having a lot of copies of various titles in stock. There is, in fact, only one reference available to us from this time about the amount of copies being made of a literary work. Pliny (Letter IV,7) tells about a certain Regulus, a man of great energy, who in his mourning over a deceased son made a thousand copies of a memoir written in his honor. This was read before a vast audience and then dispersed all over the empire. The point of Pliny's description of this event is not the amount of the copies as such, but its proof of the excessive energy of Regulus. Pliny himself obviously considered the thousand copies an example of a much too great exaggeration.

Those features in our sources that might remind modern readers of publishers, more probably indicate persons or workshops functioning rather as a kind of copying services than regular publishers. They kept various manuscripts that could be copied on order, but they did not publish.

How then were literary works, as e.g., letters, brought to the addressee? What do we know about the postal system at that time? Not very much. There were several ways of sending letters.²¹ One could use a close friend or a slave as a private messenger. Or one

²⁰ Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*, 82–95; Starr, "The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World."; Sommer, "T. Pomponius Atticus und Verbreitung von Ciceros Werken."

²¹ Stephen Robert Llewelyn, "Sending Letters in the Ancient World. Paul and the Philippians," *Tyndale Bulletin* 46 (1997): 336–56; S.R. Llewelyn, "The Conveyance of Letters," in *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity. Volume 7*, edited by S.R. Llewelyn (Macquarie University, 1994), 1–57.

could be helped by a traveller who headed for the location of the intended addressee. Such a messenger had, however, to be carefully selected as he most often was supposed to bring further information in addition to what was written in the letter (1 Thess 3:6; 1 Cor 4:17; 16:3.10). That the sender sometimes took precautions in case the carrier should turn out to be an untrustful servant is evidenced by references of proof in some letters. An interesting example is the description of the form of a certain letter and the form of its seal, provided by Josephus in *Ant.* 12,227: "This letter is four-square; and the seal is an eagle, with a dragon in his claws."

Our knowledge of the postal system at the time of 1 Peter is limited. The evidence available indicates that the postal system used by the rulers of the Persian Empire was the important precursor of both the Greek and the Roman systems.²² The Romans obviously also expanded on this system establishing a much better system of postal network in the first century CE. But the extent and nature of this network in the various provinces is not unambiguously demonstrated in our sources. This Roman system is called 'cursus publicus'.²³ It consisted of several "relay-stations" to service the communication and transport need of the official letter carriers. They were change-stations at intervals of 8–10 miles combined with change-stations with over-night quarters (*mansiones*) at a day's journey apart (ca. 23 miles). Depending on the importance of the route, these change-stations had access to about 8–40 animals. It was an institutionalized system with some officials appointed to oversee particular roads and others to administer the relay stations.

This system was used for transport of persons, but also for official postal services. We have little evidence, however, that it was used for private postal services, even though this cannot be completely ruled out. Some scholars have suggested that there might have been Christians among the official couriers, and that these then could

²² Llewelyn, S.R., "The Conveyance of Letters," 2.

²³ Llewelyn, S.R., "The Conveyance of Letters."

have carried letters from co-Christians and congregations. But the *cursus publicus* system could only be used by official persons, and there is little reason to believe that any of Paul's or Peter's couriers belonged to this category. The letter carrier(s) of 1 Peter should therefore not be linked to this official system.

We know, however, that a letter was often sent as an encyclical letter to several destinations; furthermore, several copies could be made and sent by several carriers; or one person could carry several different letters; and copies of earlier letters could be sent together with new letter(s) thus gaining a wider reading.

Travelling was not easy in the ancient Graeco-Roman world, even though the Romans made themselves famous for their road constructions. Travelling was burdensome, sometimes dangerous, and in any case time-consuming.²⁴ The Roman *Cursus Publicus* system made the official transmission of post easier than before; but private letter carriers still had to use other means. Hence it is no wonder that letter-writers often were looking for people who opted for the location of the intended recipients of a letter. People who were often on their move were especially popular as letter-carriers as, e.g., merchants and soldiers. Several papyri demonstrate that some such letters could be transmitted at a remarkable speed; others were simply delayed because there were no persons available travelling in the wanted direction, or the carrier entrusted with the letter turned out to be unfaithful and careless.²⁵

Another problematic factor for the propagation and delivery of letters was the lack of street-names and house numbering in the

²⁴ Lionel Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979); Michael B. Thompson, "The Holy Internet: Communication Between Churches in the First Christian Generation," in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, edited by Richard Bauckham (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 49–70.

²⁵ See on this Eldon Jay Epp, "New Testament Papyrus Manuscripts and Letter Carrying in Greco-Roman Times," edited by Birger Pearson, in *The Future of Early Christianity. Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 35–56, and Llewelyn, S.R., "The Conveyance of Letters," 27–29.

pre-industrial cities. How could the carriers find the addressee(s)? In many cases they presumably knew the receiver(s) or how/where to find them. On other occasions, the letters were carried by persons who did not have this knowledge. If the receiver or the receivers lived in a village, they might easily be found; the situation was quite different if they lived in Corinth or Alexandria. And what about the 1 letter of Peter, written to congregations in so vast regions? The evidence represented by papyrological findings provides some qualified answers.²⁶ The locations could be given on a label, i.e., on a separate sheet of papyrus, or directions could be given with the address on the verso of the letters. Some of these methods were most probably used concerning 1 Peter; a letter having only the address of 1 Peter 1:1 would hardly be deliverable.

But the safest procedure was to use carriers who knew the addressees and their locations. In the letters of Paul, therefore, we see that he often used co-workers as carriers. In addition to being mentioned as co-senders (cf. Sostenes: 1 Cor 1:1; Silvanus and Timotheus: 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; Timotheus: 2 Cor 1:1; Philip 1:1; Col 1:1), several persons are also mentioned as informants both from congregations to Paul and vice versa (cf. Timotheus: 1 Thess 3:2; 1 Cor 4:17; 16:10; Apollos: 1 Cor 16:12). It is not too farfetched to read several of these expressions as indications that the persons mentioned brought the letters from Paul to the congregations.²⁷

These Pauline co-workers could carry letters to several congregations, and Paul, e.g., seems to have presumed that the receivers made copies of the letters (Col 4:17). When a letter was received, furthermore, Paul recommended that it be read when the congregation was gathered (1 Thess 4:17; Col 4:16). As only a few could read at

²⁶ Llewelyn, S.R., "The Conveyance of Letters," 29–43.

²⁷ Consider Timotheus (1 Cor 4:17), Titus (2 Cor 8:16–24), and Tychikus (Eph 6:21–22; Col 4:7–9). Perhaps was also Phoebe, mentioned and recommended in Rom 16:1ff., the carrier of this letter to Rome as the letters often contained recommendations of the carriers to be read by the recipients of the letters.

this time (see above), this was a necessity. The common way of reading was by reading aloud whether in solitude or to others.

This was the way of publishing in antiquity, and by the sending of a letter to another person or a congregation, the letter was out of the author's control. The letters from the early Christian leaders as Paul and Peter had an official character that distinguished them from contemporary private letters.²⁸ Accordingly the scenario given above should be helpful in considering the process of production and distribution of a letter as the First Letter of Peter. Hence we proceed to these aspects.

1 Peter as a Graeco-Roman letter

Among the many elements relevant for an investigation of 1 Peter as a Graeco-Roman letter, I shall focus primarily two; the question of the role and function of Silvanus (5:12), and the possible ways of getting the letter into the hands of the Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia (1:1).

The Role of the Author's Community

In light of the scenario fleshed out above, the persons mentioned in 5:12–13 ('Silvanus, a faithful brother, . . . She who is at Babylon, . . . and my son Mark') might well have played a role in the making of 1 Peter. We shall deal more extensively with Silvanus below as he seems to have been directly associated with the making of the letter (5:12). But those mentioned in 5:13 might also have been more involved than merely being persons having the opportunity

²⁸ Hence the reading in the midst of a congregation is compared by Gamble (96) to the reading that found place in the literary circles (cf. Pliny): "In accordance with the meaning of publication (ekdosis) in antiquity, Paul's letters were published when they were received and read, and this situation took place in situations that Paul clearly envisioned though seldom alluded to."

of sending greetings: ‘She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does my son Mark’ (Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτὴ καὶ Μάρκος ὁ υἱός μου). The last mentioned person here, Mark, might have been the John Mark mentioned in Acts and some letters of Paul. According to Acts 12:12, Peter knew Mark’s mother Maria; in 12:25 it is narrated that Paul and Barnabas took him with them when they left Jerusalem, returning to Antioch. Later he joined Barnabas and Paul for a while on their first mission journey (Acts 13:5.13), and he worked with Barnabas only on Cyprus (Acts 15:37–39) because Paul did not want to have him as a companion. The relationship between Paul and Mark must have become better later on as he is mentioned in Col 4:10; probably Philemon 24, and even in 2 Tim 4:11. In Col 4:10 he is described as Barnabas’ nephew. While the Pauline authorship of some of these letters are disputed, the cumulative effect of these references is nevertheless that he for some time was considered a close co-worker of both Barnabas and Paul. If the purpose of 1 Peter was to influence the communities of Paul in Asia Minor, the mention of both Silvanus and Mark might have played a role in associating Peter and Paul.²⁹

The meaning of “the elect who is in Babylon” (ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτὴ) is also a little difficult to decode. To some scholars it might denote the wife of the author. This would, however, hardly be understandable to the readers. And in light of the almost parallel expression in 2 John 1 (‘elect lady’; ἐκλεκτῇ κυρίᾳ), it should most probably be read as a fictional description of the community.³⁰ This practice of a fictive person for a collective is well known from both Graeco-Roman rhetoric and Jewish literature (Jer 31:21; 4:31; Jes 37:22).³¹ Mark and ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτὴ may also have

²⁹ Klauck, *Die antike Briefliteratur und das Neue Testament. Ein Lehr- und Arbeitsbuch*, 256.

³⁰ Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 353.

³¹ Klauck, *Die antike Briefliteratur und das Neue Testament. Ein Lehr- und Arbeitsbuch*, 43.

played a role in the making of the letter. Compared to the practice of Pliny, the persons indicated by 1 Pet 5:12 may have read the letter, and may have offered advice of correction and precision of its details. Hence the reference to the community and Mark can be a reference to those having been read the letter to for evaluation, and then adding their greetings.

The Role of Silvanus According to 5:12

When it comes to Silvanus as mentioned in 5:12, most commentators assign him a larger role in the making or propagation of the letter, and we now turn to this issue.

The main problem in 5:12 ('By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you'; Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖν τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, ὡς λογίζομαι, δι' ὀλίγων ἔγραψα) is the question whether Silvanus here is designated as the *writer* (secretary) or the *bearer* of the letter, or possibly both. The various expositions in the commentaries by New Testament scholars demonstrate the variety of opinions in vogue.

Silvanus (1 Pet 5:12) in Recent Research

Some scholars argue that Silvanus is mentioned simply because he was the carrier, not the amanuensis.³² J. Ramsay Michaels finds Silvanus to have been the carrier of the letter; if not through all the regions mentioned in 1:1, perhaps from Rome to its first destination in Asia Minor: "Silvanus could simply carried the letter to its port of entry, probably either Amisus or Amastris on the Black Sea, and been officially welcomed there and at a few congregations in the vicinity. His personal greetings from Peter would then have been conveyed by word of mouth from congregation to congregation

³² Cf. W.G. Kümmel, who even states that nobody has "yet demonstrated that γράφω διὰ τινος can mean to have a piece of writing composed by another." See W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1966), 298.

through the provinces along with the letter itself.”³³ N. Brox is probably one of those who most energetically has argued that Silvanus is to be considered as the carrier, not an amanuensis.³⁴ His arguments are strongly colored by his view that 1 Peter is a pseudonymous letter,³⁵ and he considers the mentioning of Silvanus a literary device.³⁶ His main arguments for considering the expression concerning Silvanus as denoting the bearer of the letter, not the amanuensis, are drawn from similar expressions in the Letters of Ignatius. This interpretation has been accepted by many as quite convincing,³⁷ and we shall have a closer look at these passages below.

Other scholars, however, consider Silvanus as the amanuensis only, though they may differ on the degree of Silvanus’ involvement in composing the letter. J.N.D. Kelly³⁸ on his part states that Silvanus should not be considered as a dictation clerk only, “a role too modest for so important a figure”! According to Kelly, he was more probably drafting the letter on behalf of the author and on his instructions. F.W. Beare then is even more emphatic in his assertions, stating that the “By Silvanus, . . . I have written” (Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ . . . ἔγραψα) cannot carry the meaning that Silvanus was only the bearer of the letter, he must have been the amanuensis. And he adds: “It is simply fatuous to think a single courier conveying

³³ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 307.

³⁴ Norbert Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar XXI (Neukirchen, 1979), 240–43; Norbert Brox, “Zur pseudepigraphischen Rahmung des ersten Petrusbriefes,” *Biblische Zeitschrift* 19 (1975): 78–96.

³⁵ This is accepted by many, but there are still some strong counter-arguments; see esp. E.G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, reprint, 1946 (London) and Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 767–81, esp. 1011–28.

³⁶ Brox, “Zur pseudepigraphischen Rahmung des ersten Petrusbriefes,” 84–85.

³⁷ Cf. e.g., most strongly Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 349–52; Richards, E.R., *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, 68–73. See now also E. Randolph Richards, “Silvanus Was not Peter’s Secretary: Theological Bias in Interpreting διὰ Σιλουανοῦ . . . ἔγραψα,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43 (2000): 417–32.

³⁸ J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, Black’s New Testament Commentaries (London, 1969), 214–15.

such a letter to all parts of the four provinces mentioned in the Address. . . . Silvanus is mentioned as the amanuensis, nothing more, nothing less.”³⁹ D.E. Hiebert even states that “It is widely accepted today that Peter used Silvanus as his amanuensis”, and considers that it offers an explanation for the smooth Greek of the letter.⁴⁰

Several other scholars consider Silvanus both as an amanuensis and as the carrier of the letter. According to C.E.B. Cranfield,⁴¹ the very fact that the author says “I have written” rather than “I have sent” indicates that Silvanus was also the amanuensis, but adds that it offers no indication of how much responsibility he might have had. Furthermore, he suggests that the reason for commending Silvanus is presumably that he was the bearer of the letter.⁴²

The Force of the Expression “to write by” (γραφειν διὰ)

A main focus in the debate so briefly sketched above is the function of the preposition “by” (διὰ) in the expression of 1 Pet 5:12, and in some other texts which have a similar expression. Some of the letters of Ignatius play a primary role among these texts.

³⁹ Francis Wright Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter. The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), 209; Birger Olsson, *Första Petrusbrevet, Kommentar Till Nya Testamentet* (Stockholm, 1982), 204.

⁴⁰ D. Edmund Hiebert, *First Peter: An Expository Commentary* (Chicago, 1984), 307.

⁴¹ C.E.B. Cranfield, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude. Introduction and Commentary* (SCM Press, 1960), 137.

⁴² E. Best too considers the possibilities of Silvanus being both a secretary and the carrier, but does not decide the issue. See Ernest Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, Black’s New Testament Commentaries (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1972), ad. loc. Selwyn (Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 241) understands the role of “dia” as indicating Silvanus both “as draftsman and as bearer of the Epistle.” E.R. Richards considers Silvanus as both the secretary and the courier of the letter, but he will not use 1 Peter 5:12 as argument for his view of Silvanus as the secretary. See Richards, E. Randolph, “Silvanus was not,” 431–32; Jens Herzer, *Petrus oder Paulus? Studien über das Verhältnis des ersten Petrusbriefes zur paulinischen Tradition*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 103 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 62–71.

The Ignatian Letters

There are four statements in the Ignatian letters that many find demonstrate that such an expression denotes the carrier of the letters and not the writer/secretary:

IgnRom 10,1: “Now I am writing these things to you from Smyrna by the blessed Ephesians, . . .” (Γράφω δε ὑμῖν ταῦτα ἀπὸ Σμύρνης δι’ Ἐφεσίων τῶν ἀξιομακαρίστων.)

IgnSmy 12,1: “whence I am writing to you by Burrhus, whom you together with the Ephesians your brothers sent with me” (ὅθεν καὶ γράφω ὑμῖν διὰ Βούρρου, ὃν ἀπεστείλατε μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἅμα Ἐφεσίοις, τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ὑμῶν.)

IgnPhi 11,2: “I am writing thence to you by Burrhus, who was sent with me by the Ephesians and Smyrnaeans as a mark of honor” (ὅθεν καὶ γράφω ὑμῖν διὰ Βούρρου πεμφθέντος ἅμα ἐμοὶ ἀπὸ Ἐφεσίων καὶ Σμυρναίων εἰς λόγον τιμῆς.)

IgnPol 15: “This I have written to you by Crescetes, . . . (Haec vobis scripsi per Crescentem, . . .).

The letter of Ignatius to the Romans is written from Smyrna, the two others from Troas, and the text segments quoted above all belong to the final greeting sections at the end of the letters. In *IgnSmy 12,1* and *IgnPhi 11,2* Bourros is singled out, in *IgnRom 10,1* the Ephesians have the same role assigned to them. According to *IgnPhi 11,2* and *IgnSmy 12,1*, however, Bourros too belongs to the Ephesians, and *IgnEph 2,1* characterizes him as a ‘deacon’ from Ephesus. The Ephesians, furthermore, are also mentioned in *IgnMgn 15,1* and *IgnTrall 13,1* as someone who greets the readers; hence the Ephesians are mentioned in 5 of his 7 letters. Who are they, and what are their roles? We might also notice that it is only in the letters to the Romans, Philadelphians and the Smyrnians that Ignatius says anything about by whom the letters have been written. As we know nothing more about the Ephesians or Bourros, it is hard to determine their exact role here indicated. To several scholars, these references denote the carriers of the letters, not the writers.

According to Brox, “An der Bedeutung des διὰ (per) an allen vier Stellen gibt es keinen Zweifel, es kennzeichnet den (die) Überbringer des Briefes.”⁴³ Schoedel is somewhat more careful as he suggests that IgnRom 10,1 “probably indicates that the Ephesian representatives carried the letter,” and the mentioning of Bourros (IgnPhi 11,2) indicates that he “served either as Ignatius’ scribe or (as seems more likely in light of IgnRom. 10,1) the bearer of this letter.”⁴⁴ The decisive evidence is here found in the mentioning of the Ephesians (plural). As we have no other clear evidence of a group of people functioning as secretaries (in a kind of scriptorium?),⁴⁵ Brox’s reading of IgnRom 10,1 might be correct. But that does not necessarily mean that this is the only reading possible of the references to Bourros and of 1 Pet 5:12. Some other observations indicate the need for a more balanced judgment here.

1 Peter 5:12

One of the problems of relating the expression “write by” (γράφω διὰ) to the function of carrying the letters is that we have hardly any other texts that unambiguously demonstrate this particular use of the same expression. Even Brox admits that neither the Thesaurus Lingua Graeca nor any Greek classical lexicons know about any other occurrences of “to write by someone” (γράφειν διὰ τινος) indicating the carrier of a letter.⁴⁶ This observation should make one more reluctant to state that for the Christian examples this reading is “unbestreitbar” (Brox).

Such a reluctance is supported by a somewhat younger occurrence of the expression contained in Eusebius *Historia Ecclesiastica*

⁴³ Brox, “Zur pseudepigraphischen Rahmung des ersten Petrusbriefes,” 87.

⁴⁴ William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch. A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 191.214; Richards, E.R., *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, 69–73.

⁴⁵ Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*, 88–89.

⁴⁶ Cf. Brox, “Zur pseudepigraphischen Rahmung des ersten Petrusbriefes,” 87, note 28. My own searches on the TLG CD have not yielded any further results.

4,23,11 where it is used about a letter written by Clemens (“as that written to us before by Clemens”; ὡς καὶ τὴν προτέραν ἡμῖν διὰ Κλήμεντος γραφείσαν). Here it undoubtedly points to Clemens as the writer, not as the carrier.⁴⁷

Another comparable expression, however, this time from the New Testament, can be more rewarding: In Acts 15:23 it is said that the Apostolic decree was written by the hands of Judas, called Barsabbas, and Silas (γράψαντες διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν). This is most often translated as meaning that the letter was sent with Barsabbas and Silas; in 15:27 it is also explicitly said that Judas and Silas were to be the carriers and further informers. But the expression of 15:23 might indicate that they also were the writers of the letter.⁴⁸ This reading is, admittedly, quite probable, and important as Acts 15 is from about the same time as 1 Peter. 1 Peter 5:12 contains also a couple of more issues that might indicate that Silvanus was the writer, if not also the carrier.

There are two items in this verse not present in the other alleged parallels from Ignatius. The first one is the qualifying addition stating the briefness of the letter; “I have written briefly” (δι’ ὀλίγων ἔγραψα). Goppelt and Radermacher consider a figurative understanding of “have written” as excluded by this addition,⁴⁹ the expression surely points to the writing of the letter by Silvanus. Furthermore, the description of the content of the letter is also immediately introduced as “exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace in which you stand” (παρακαλῶν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρῶν ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς ἣν στήτε). This is introduced as characterizing what the author considers having done in writing the letter, and

⁴⁷ Contra Richards, E. Randolph, “Silvanus was not.”

⁴⁸ Cf. the translation of 15:23 in KJV: “and they wrote letters by them . . .” Herzer (Herzer, *Petrus oder Paulus?* 66–67) reads Acts 15:22f as indicating both writers and transmitters, and hence useful for understanding 1 Pet 5:12 in the same way.

⁴⁹ Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, edited by F. Hahn (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1993), 369; L. Radermacher, “Der erste Petrusbrief und Silvanus,” *Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 24 (1925): 293.

is a summary of the content not found in the Ignatian letters.

Accordingly, Silvanus might very well have been involved in the writing of the letter. The lack of an exact description of what his assistance may have consisted of, is not decisive. In light of the scenario fleshed out above⁵⁰ several options are possible: he could have been a recorder of the letter as dictated by the author, he could have been an editor on the basis of a draft, a co-author or the composer. Both the counterargument of Brox⁵¹ that if Silvanus composed the letter, Peter could not be called the author is anachronistic as well as his statement that Silvanus' self-characterization would then be "peinliche Selbstempfehlung".⁵² 1 Pet 5:12–14 might very well be the real author's own addition to the letter (cf. Gal 6:11; 1 Cor 16:21). And finally, to argue that if Silvanus was the drafter that would make one expect him to be identified as co-author in the salutation at the beginning of the letter⁵³ is without necessary evidence from other letters, and might in fact be to beg the question.

Hence I conclude that there are still good reasons to believe that the mention of Silvanus in 1 Pet 5:12 is primarily meant to signal that he had a hand in the production of the letter. That he also was the carrier of the letter is not thereby excluded, neither is it proven. But in light of the vast regions mentioned in 1:1 as the intended destinations of the letter, it is hardly a very plausible option. Hence we proceed to a closer examination of this issue.

The Regions of Destination

The enumeration in 1:1 of central regions of Asia Minor ("Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia") represents the areas of destination of the letter. In fact it comprises most of Asia Minor.

⁵⁰ See also Richards, E.R., *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, 97–111.

⁵¹ Brox, "Zur pseudepigraphischen Rahmung des ersten Petrusbriefes," 83.

⁵² Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 242; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 349.

⁵³ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 349.

Some scholars also suggest that the order of the areas represent the route of the carrier(s). Regardless of who are to be characterized as the carrier(s) of the letter, a further investigation of the areas of destination as such, the way they are listed as possible representing the route of the carrier(s), and possible routes for travelling as a letter carrier should be pursued a little more. Hence, in order to clarify these latter questions, I will try a closer look at these issues and what light might be gained from what we know about the road structures in these parts of Asia Minor.

The Various Regions Mentioned

There has been some discussion about how the various names given in 1:1 are to be understood. But most probably they denote the provinces, not merely geographical areas.⁵⁴ Otherwise it is hard to explain why just these, and not also other geographical areas as Paphlagonia, Phrygia, Pisidia are mentioned. The separate mention of Pontus and Bithynia is harder to understand, however, as they at this time belonged to the same province, namely Pontus. But this feature is most often explained as due to the travelling route of the courier (see below). The intended recipients of the letter then, lived in a vast area. According to Elliott, the regions probably comprised ca. 128.889 square miles and a population of 8.500.000.⁵⁵ Mitchell, on his part, suggests that in the first century CE, the main areas of Bithynia, Paphlagonia, Pontus, Galatia, Lycaonia, Asian Phrygia, Mysia and Lydia probably contained about 130 cities.⁵⁶ Analogies with other parts of the empire suggest that few cities had more

⁵⁴ Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 60; Goppelt, Leonhard, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 3; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 83–85.

⁵⁵ Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 60. Elliott here draws on T.R.S. Broughton, "Roman Asia Minor," in *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, ed. Tenney Frank (Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1983), pp. 812–816.

⁵⁶ Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor. Volume I. The Celts and the Impact of Roman Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, 1995 pap), 243. The distribution of cities within these areas he gives as Bithynia 13, Pontus 11, Paphlagonia 6, Galatia and Lycaonia 20, Phrygia about 45, Mysia 11 and Lydia 20.

than about 25000 inhabitants;⁵⁷ the majority would have had between 5000 to 15000, and not a few 3000 or less. Assuming an average of 7000 would suggest an urban population of about 910.000. Furthermore, considering the fact that the cities at this time had a lot of associated rural villages in their vicinity,⁵⁸ and that the rural population probably outnumbered the city dwellers by a margin of up to ten to one, this would make a population of a total of 7 to 8 millions. Indeed a vast area for a letter carrier, not forgetting that the letter was also destined for the even more populous western parts of Asia Minor.⁵⁹

The Specific Regions

Hence a focus on the sequence of the regions mentioned is in order. Several options have been suggested. According to Selwyn,⁶⁰ the old hypothesis of Hort,⁶¹ that the names occur in the order the bearer planned to travel, “seems still without adequate rival.” But he also surmises that “copies may well have been made at the chief centers en route for regional distribution.” Others, as for instance Beare,⁶²

⁵⁷ Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor. Volume I. The Celts and the Impact of Roman Rule*, 244.

⁵⁸ I.W.J. Hopkins, “The City Region in Roman Palestine,” *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* (1980).

⁵⁹ On the provincial borders, see Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor. Volume II. The Rise of the Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, 1995 pap), Appendix I, pp. 151–57. On the history of the provinces, see the relevant articles in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*: Anthony Sheppard, “Bithynia,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary Volume 1:A–C*, edited by David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 750–53; Richard D. Sullivan, “Pontus,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary Volume 5:O–Sh*, edited by David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 401–02; Richard D. Sullivan, “Cappadocia,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary Volume 1:A–C*, edited by David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 870–72; Stephen Mitchell, “Galatia,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary Volume 2:D–G*, edited by David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 870–72.

⁶⁰ Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 119; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 9.

⁶¹ F.J.A. Hort, *The First Epistle of St. Peter I, 1–II, 17: The Greek Text with Introductory Lecture, Commentary, and Additional Notes* by the Late F.J.A. Hort (London: MacMillan, 1898).

⁶² Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter. The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, 42.

suggest that this takes too little account of the conditions of fierce persecutions prevailing at the time, and he conjectures that the names of Pontus and Bithynia are put at the beginning and end of the list in order to give them prominence since the author is anxious to focus upon them as the storm centers. There is, however, hardly sufficient evidence to sustain such a hypothesis. Other scholars suggest that the regions are far too vast for one carrier to travel, and surmises that Silvanus possibly may have carried the letter to the harbor of Sinope or Amisus, and then copies were taken to the various other regions. Accordingly, Silvanus was partly the carrier, and also that the regions listed represent the areas of destination, but not necessarily in the order of the carriers' travel routes. It might also be possible that we are no longer able to recover the meaning of the order of the provinces given in 1:1. Actemeier favors such a reluctance, while Brox considers the question in light of his view that the letter is an pseudepigraphical encyclical letter, and surmises that the order is quite "willkürlich", representing just a literary device.⁶³

The reading that 1:1 represents the travel route of the carrier(s) has in recent times been given a thorough presentation by C.J. Hemer.⁶⁴ He argues that Sinope was probably not the harbor for the arrival of the messenger because it had little intercourse with the interior, and suggests that the carrier, possibly Silvanus, arrived at Amisus, a little further east, which was a much larger place of communication, and that he used the roads from there southwards.

He does not presuppose, however, that the regions mentioned need to have been thoroughly visited by the carrier; the route he suggests merely touches some of the provinces mentioned, and Galatia would have been visited twice because Cappadocia is not contiguous with Asia. Furthermore, it may have been enough to visit at

⁶³ "Die Frage ist, ob für den 1 Peter überhaupt eine konkrete Empfangssituation und auf sie bezogene Absichten angenommen werden können" Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 26.

⁶⁴ Hemer, "The Address of 1 Peter."

least one accessible place in each province, from which other messengers carried copies to the principal churches of the territory.⁶⁵

Accordingly Hemer suggests that Silvanus crossed the provincial Galatia through Amasia, and that Caesarea was probably the main objective in Cappadocia. Thereafter he used the great trade route westward across South Galatia to Asia and Bithynia; in the latter he probably visited the great Bithynian cities of Nicea, Nicomedia, Chalcedon and Bysantine, and from that region he returned to Rome.

His study has been influential as it is accepted by some and mentioned by most others dealing with this issue; but it has not been object of a closer investigation. Drawing on some recent works on Anatolia, I will try to offer a few further suggestions here as to the question whether it is plausible or not to read the order of these provinces as representing the travelling route of the carrier(s) of this 1 letter of Peter.

Roads and Road Structures

There have been several studies of the road structures of Asia Minor in recent times;⁶⁶ hence we might gain some further light on the question of the ways the letter could get to the various parts of Asia Minor.

The roads of inner Asia Minor were very important for military purposes. During the latter half of the first century CE an elaborate fortification of central parts of the Anatolia found place, not at least on the western part of Euphrates. These areas were borderline areas, and important defense regions for the Romans; hence Roman legions

⁶⁵ Hemer, "The Address of 1. Peter," 239.

⁶⁶ David French, "Acts and the Roman Roads of Asia Minor," in *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting*, edited by David W. Gill and Conrad Gempf, *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting* 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1994), 49–57; David French, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor. Fasc. 1: The Pilgrim's Road*, BAR International Series 105 (Oxford, England: B.A.R., 1981); Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor. Volume I. The Celts and the Impact of Roman Rule*, esp. 118–36; D.H. French, "The Roman Road-System of Asia Minor," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Principat 7.2 Politische Geschichte*, Hrg. Hildegard Temporini (Berlin New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 698–729.

and auxiliary units were based there. Roman military control needed rapid communications, and the ability to move troops and supplies between provinces and frontiers. Garrisons and auxiliary units were placed at strategic centres on the routes that criss-crossed the regions of Asia minor. Hence this period also saw great activities of road construction and road improvements. This work is especially associated with the Flavian Emperors, especially in the eighties, but also by the end of the century and between 119 and 122 CE. According to Mitchell, "Since the whole Anatolian system was an organic unity, with each individual road functioning as an integral part of a much larger scheme, logic suggests that the whole network was conceived and built as soon as was practicable after the establishment of the frontier itself."⁶⁷ Major highways, roadways, tracks and paths criss-crossed the regions constituting an immense network of communication channels. A highway is defined by French as a broad built, engineered, paved and maintained line of communication, on average more than 3,25 meters wide; a roadway was less than 3,25 meters wide; a trackway was not paved, but regularly maintained, and the tracks represented a non-built, non-paved, but known, accepted and regularly used line of communication.⁶⁸ The major Roman roads were elaborate, paved broad structures, attested by hundreds of milestones, the road lines several places still visible in the terrain, and sometimes even still at the base of present roads. It was first by the end of the nineteenth century that Anatolia acquired new roads on a remotely comparable scale.⁶⁹

In the first century CE, there were four major routes in the Anatolian network.⁷⁰ The main city of Galatia, Ancyra, played a major

⁶⁷ Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor. Volume I. The Celts and the Impact of Roman Rule*, 124.

⁶⁸ French, David, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor. Fasc. 1: The Pilgrim's Road*, 128; French, D.H., "The Roman Road-System of Asia Minor," 703.

⁶⁹ Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor. Volume I. The Celts and the Impact of Roman Rule*, 127.

⁷⁰ I here draw on Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor. Volume I. The Celts and the Impact of Roman Rule*, 127–32. See esp. the maps on pp. 130–131.

role in several of them. In the northern part, one ran eastward from Byzantium and Nicomedia, along the valleys of Paphlagonia and Pontus, through the cities of Pompeiopolis, Neoclaudiopolis, Neocaesarea and Nicopolis to the military headquarter of Santala. If the letter carrier came from Amisus, he would cross this highway north of Amaseia if he went further south as Hemer suggested. He could, however, also get into this road from Sinope, as there was a track from Sinope over the mountains south into this highway. Another major highway crossed the centre of Anatolia, starting in the north-west at Bosphorus, passing through Ancyra, and then eastwards to Tavium, Sebastopolis and to Sebasteia, which were another nodal point, having highways that went north to the highway mentioned above (to Nicopolis), and south-east to Caesarea in Cappadocia. A third route left Ancyra and ran southeast to the same Caesarea. Then there was the so-called Pilgrim's road, which probably ran from Byzantium and across to Ancyra, and then south-east through the Cilician gates and to Tarsus and northern Syria. This road and its many remaining milestones have been comprehensively studied and catalogued by D. French.⁷¹

In addition to these main highways, there were many lesser roadways, many of them linked to these highways, and together with the even lesser roads as trackways and pathways they made up an elaborate system of networks. As we do not know, however, how a letter carrier as the bearer of 1 Peter would travel, we should probably also include the lesser tracks not useful for wagons, but fully suitable for travelling on the back of an animal as a horse or a donkey; and some parts might be traveled on foot. The possibilities of travel routes were thus many and variegated.

⁷¹ French, David, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor. Fasc. 1: The Pilgrim's Road*; David French, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor. Fasc. 2: An Interim Catalogue of Milestones Part 1, BAR International Series 392(I)* (Oxford, England: B.A.R., 1988); *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor. Fasc. 2: An Interim Catalogue of Milestones Part 2, BAR International Series 392(II)* (Oxford, England: B.A.R., 1988).

Travelling at these times was not easy or comfortable, but always very time-consuming. An official governmental courier might travel at a speed of five miles per hour for a total of fifty miles in a normal day's travelling. He was also greatly helped along by the various relay stations and inns that were at his disposal or that had to make priority reservations for him as an official courier.⁷² Other people might use their own resources, and those who were not wealthy elite members of the society, that is the majority, had to help themselves as best they could. They inevitably moved along more slowly than the official couriers. According to Casson, "in normal terrain, with no toilsome slopes to negotiate, he did about fifteen to twenty miles a day on foot, some twenty-five to thirty in a carriage. Forty, even forty-five, was possible but it meant an exhaustingly long and hard day's travel."⁷³ In addition, one has to take account of the mountainous nature of several parts of the inner Asia Minor, the dangers from wild animals in the more isolated areas, and if taking the minor routes, also the possible desolated areas where one could travel for days without seeing any populated places.

The toilsome nature of travelling, and the high costs both with regard to money and struggle, led to the practice that one often looked for people who were planning to travel in the intended direction and made them carry the letters to be sent instead of engaging expensive private couriers. Again one's networks of friends and friends of friends were important.

I suggest that all these issues should be taken into consideration when discussing the possibility of Silvanus having been the carrier of the 1 letter of Peter. But in most of the studies dealt with above these aspects have been neglected. The weakness of Hemer's brief study is that he considers the carrier to have taken the main high-ways while there were a lot of additional routes available. Furthermore, even he must admit that the route of travelling from Pontus through

⁷² Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World*, 176–96.

⁷³ Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World*, 189.

Galatia to Cappadocia and then to Asia is not possible as Cappadocia has no borders with Asia. Hence the order of 1 Pet 1:1 is already broken. In addition, these areas are so wide that they were hardly possible for one carrier to cover.

In light of the practice of letter transmittance in ancient times, and the vast areas of destination of this letter, I would suggest that a more probable scenario should include several carriers; if a carrier brought the letter from Rome by sea to one of the harbors in Asia Minor, possibly in Pontus, the letter would most probably have been copied there, and then sent further on to other Christian communities in the same areas and then further on. A further detailed schedule of the possible travel plan would involve too many uncertainties and guesswork to be plausible. But a main conclusion may be drawn from the above; the propagation of the letter by one courier is one of the least plausible.

Conclusions

Light from studies of ancient epistolography coupled with insights from other relevant studies of Asia Minor illuminate several of the questions raised in recent research concerning the making and propagation of a letter as 1 Peter.

a) The making of the letter, the writing process, and especially the practice of having a letter read to a close group of friends and associates might have been the context of the presence of Mark and the community mentioned in 1 Peter 5:13.

b) The description of Silvanus in 1 Peter 5:12 should most probably be read as denoting the writer/secretary, not the carrier; the expression of δι' ὀλίγων ἔγραψα associated with Silvanus is otherwise hard to understand.

c) This conclusion is supported by a consideration of the vast areas of destination given in 1 Peter 1:1. Admittedly, a carrier might be mentioned in a letter to ensure the receivers of his reliability, but as 1 Peter is a circular letter intended for a vast territory, such

a mention would make little sense as it is very unlikely that Silvanus could be considered as *the* carrier of the letter to all these regions.

d) A more plausible scenario of the transmission of the letter would involve several copying processes, several couriers, and finally, not at least an extended period of time for the letter to reach all the areas listed in its introductory section.

CHAPTER TWO

PAROIKOS KAI PAREPIDEMOS: PROSELYTE CHARACTERIZATIONS IN 1 PETER?

In three recent studies of 1 Peter, the authors have suggested three different controlling metaphors as important for the writer of 1 Peter and hence crucial for our understanding of that letter. Troy W. Martin suggests ‘Diaspora’ as the controlling metaphor;¹ Reinhard Feldmeier suggests ‘der Fremde’,² while Paul J. Achtemeier³ in his recent commentary suggests ‘Israel’. In spite of the fact that they all also find other metaphors important as sub-metaphors in the letter, none of them has paid much attention to the role of proselyte/proselytism as a major aspect of the letter. ‘Proselyte/proselytism’ is a subcategory that goes well together with both ‘Diaspora’ and ‘Israel’, and I will here argue that the issue of ‘proselyte/proselytism’ plays a much greater role in the letter than has hitherto been observed.

In his impressive commentary, Achtemeier says that understanding ‘Israel’ as being the controlling metaphor for the Christian community in 1 Peter clarifies several points that have been problematic in the understanding of the letter. It clarifies the fact that, despite its OT related terminology, the letter was not written to Jewish-Christian readers; second, it makes possible the proper understanding of the characterization *παροικὸς καὶ παρεπίδημος*; third, it clarifies the self-understanding of the Christians as a “new people of God.”

¹ Troy W. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, SBL Dissertation Series (Alpharetta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), 144–61.

² Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*, 175–77.

³ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 69–72.

Fourth, it answers the question why historical Israel is never mentioned in the letter.⁴

I will take as my point of departure his second point, the use of such categories as *πάροικος*, *παροικία*, and *παρεπίδημος* in the letter. If we accept Israel as a central category for understanding the arguments and descriptions in the letter, some characterizations of the Christians, especially of their social conditions in society, are best understood from the perspective of proselyte/proselytism. In addition to using traditional terms from the conceptual field of 'Israel', I find that 1 Peter uses proselyte related terminology in its descriptions.

I would state my main thesis in this chapter thus: In some Diaspora Jewish works, the terms *πάροικος* and *παρεπίδημος* belong to the semantic field 'proselyte/proselytism.' In 1 Peter, however, they do not indicate that the recipients of the letter are considered actual former proselytes. The terms function, rather, as metaphors drawn from the social world of proselytes (source domain), characterizing the social situation of the Petrine Christians (target domain), especially throwing light on the social estrangement of the Christian converts in the Graeco-Roman societies of Asia Minor as understood by the author.

A few aspects of my thesis and procedures should be highlighted here. First, I will not argue that these terms belong to the semantic field 'proselyte/proselytism' *alone*, but that this is a relevant, though neglected field. Second, we should not argue so much from the standpoint of the social situation of the Christians in Asia Minor; in fact we know very little about it. I focus, rather, on how the author of 1 Peter, according to his letter, *perceived their situation*. Here the issue of proselyte/proselytism seems relevant. Third, drawing upon the view of metaphors set forth by Lakoff and Johnson,⁵ espe-

⁴ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 71–72.

⁵ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors we Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

cially their view of structural metaphors, I consider the social world of proselytes/proselytism the *source domain* for these terms and the perceived life of the Petrine Christians as the *target domain*. I shall elaborate a little on the views of Lakoff and Johnson below. Fourth, I shall substantiate my view by reconsidering the much-discussed terms of *πάροικος* and *παρεπίδημος* (1:1.17; 2:11), especially drawing on interesting descriptions of proselytes in the works of Philo of Alexandria and in some other Jewish Diaspora works. I do not posit any literary connections between 1 Peter and the works of Philo, but they both belong to the first-century Diaspora, and have some important social aspects in common. Some of these social aspects were their needs and efforts to keep a distinct identity in the pluralistic Graeco-Roman world, especially their views and attitudes toward outsiders and newcomers. The Jewish Hellenistic Diaspora communities had a history of coping with these issues and, since many of the first Christians had a Jewish or a proselyte background, they appropriated many of the Jewish debates and practices.⁶ As a “word of exhortation” (5:12), 1 Peter is trying to strengthen the Christians by guiding them in their Christian-identity building.

Hence both the ways that Jews described the proselytes and the social position of their proselytes in the Graeco-Roman world illuminate the author’s understanding of the situation of the Christians to whom he wrote.

⁶ I am here influenced by the view on these issues in the works of Peder Borgen. A main thesis in many of his works is that “The Early Church draws on traditions, debates and practices from Jewish proselytism, modifies them, and makes them to serve a different kind of community structure.” See Peder Borgen, “The Early Church and the Hellenistic Synagogue,” in *Philo, John and Paul: New Perspectives on Judaism and Early Christianity*, by Peder Borgen, Brown Judaic Studies (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987), 207–32, here cited from p. 208. See also Peder Borgen, “‘Yes,’ ‘No,’ ‘How Far?’: The Participation of Jews and Christians in Pagan Cults,” in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context*, edited by Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Fortress Press, 1994), 30–59. Borgen has not, however, focused much on 1 Peter.

The Recipients of 1 Peter in Recent Research

Non-metaphorical Readings

The Recipients as Former Proselytes

In his article from 1956, 'Christianity according to 1 Peter', van Unnik said, "it is very interesting to see that in a number of places this epistle uses expressions which are very closely parallel to those used in connection with the proselytes among the Jews."⁷ He did not develop this idea any further in that study; but he obviously alluded to and drew upon an earlier work of his own on 1 Pet 1:18–19, published in the Netherlands in 1942.⁸ Here his main thesis was that the 'blood' of 1 Pet 1:18–19 is to be read as a reference to the proselyte offering needed for acceptance into Israel,⁹ and he lists 15 additional points where he finds traces of proselytism in the letter.¹⁰ While admitting that not all of these passages contain clear references to proselytism, he finds that "the similarities appear constantly *wherever the situation of the addressees of the epistles is being treated* and wherever the work of Jesus is discussed" (his emphasis).¹¹ From these observations, he draws further conclusions

⁷ See W.C. van Unnik, "Christianity According to 1 Peter," in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W.C. Van Unnik Part Two*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980), 115. Cf. further down on the same page: "It may be that he is thinking here of the so-called "God-fearers", men like Cornelius and others who are often mentioned in Acts." This article was first published in *The Expository Times*, LXVIII, Dec. 1956, pp. 79–83.

⁸ Because of the language barrier, this study was not accessible to many before its republication in English in volume II of his *Sparsa Collecta* in 1980. See W.C. van Unnik, "The Redemption in 1 Peter I 18–19 and the Problem of the First Epistle of Peter," in *Sparsa Collecta Part II*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980), 3–82. It was first published as "De Verlossing 1 Petrus i 18–19 en het probleem van den eersten Petrusbrief," *Mededelingen der Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks*, deel 5, no. 1, 1942, 1–106.

⁹ Cf. comments by Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 130.

¹⁰ Among these are 2:2,9; 3:18; 1:14; 4:3; 3:9,13; 4:7,12–13.

¹¹ Unnik, W.C. van, "The Redemption in 1 Peter I 18–19 and the Problem of the First Epistle of Peter," 68.

concerning the addressees and the objectives of the epistle: he dates the letter before 70 CE, he finds no pivotal objections to seeing the Apostle Peter as its author, and he states that the letter is addressed to “people who had formerly been pagans, had joined the Synagogue as “godfearers”, but had later been converted to Christianity.”¹²

In his arguments he draws a little upon Philo of Alexandria’s characterizations of proselytes as well as some other Jewish works. With regard to the particular expressions of 1:1.17; 2:11 (πάροικος, παροικία, and παρεπίδημος), he treats them not as metaphors, but as denoting the people from whom the converts were drawn—that is God-fearers and proselytes. These former pagans were exiles in a double sense; on the earth as πάροικοι and in the synagogue as παρεπίδημοι. According to van Unnik, the narratives of Acts about the mission of Paul confirm such an interpretation.

Few would follow van Unnik today in many of his interpretations in this article, but it represents an important and concise exposition of his view. Crucial questions remain—such as, for example, the issue whether a reference to proselytes in terms of 1:1.17; 2:11 is bound to a literal understanding of them as denoting former proselytes to Judaism or whether actual proselytism could also be the source background for a metaphorical understanding.

J. Ramsey Michaels briefly states in his commentary that “No one will seriously argue that the Gentile Christians to whom 1 Peter was written were actual proselytes to Judaism . . . Peter is dealing with metaphors.”¹³ He had probably not read van Unnik.¹⁴ Furthermore, according to Michaels, the author did not know the exact background of the recipients and, while there are many characterizations

¹² Unnik, W.C. van, “The Redemption in 1 Peter I 18–19 and the Problem of the First Epistle of Peter,” 81.

¹³ Michaels, *1 Peter*, lii.

¹⁴ See now, however, Scot McKnight: “In general, we can safely conclude that the audience of Peter was comprised of Gentile converts to Christianity who had probably been proselytes to Judaism or at least God-fearers.” Scot McKnight, *1 Peter. The NIV Application Commentary*, The NIV Application Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1996), 24.

and descriptions in the letter, they are not used to define the recipients' legal or social status in the Roman Empire but "simply to further his standing analogy between them and the Jewish people."¹⁵

K. Berger has also noted the similarity between the Jewish descriptions of proselytes and the Christians in 1 Peter. According to Berger, the author of 1 Peter does see the fate of the Gentile Christians as comparable and very similar to that of the Jewish proselytes. They might have been considered a kind of proselytes by non-Christians, and the author teaches his readers to accept this kind of identity. In this way, the addressees should accept their isolation, and in a spiritual and social way live as strangers and aliens, avoiding assimilation.¹⁶

A few scholars, then, have already considered the category 'proselyte/proselytism,' but no agreements have been reached. While van Unnik argues for a realistic interpretation—that is, that the Christian converts addressed in 1 Peter had in fact been proselytes or God-fearers—both Michaels and Berger, as far as they accept the category of 'proselyte/proselytism', read these terms as metaphors. We shall follow up on some of these issues below.

The Recipients as Social Strangers and Aliens

The New Testament scholar who in recent years has been the most formative and representative person for the view that the terms *παροικος* and *παρεπίδημος* are not to be read as metaphors but as social descriptions is undoubtedly John H. Elliott.¹⁷

In his study *A Home for the Homeless*, he provides one of the best expositions so far of the possible social implications of the terms

¹⁵ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 116.

¹⁶ Berger, *Theologiegeschichte des Urchristentums: Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 413.

¹⁷ Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*; John H. Elliott, "1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy: A Discussion with David Balch," in *Perspectives on First Peter*, Ch. H. Talbert, Special Studies Series (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 61–78; John H. Elliott, *What is Social Science Criticism?* Guides to Biblical Scholarship (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 70–86; John H. Elliott, *1 Peter. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 37B (New York: Doubleday, 2000).

concerned. He finds that the terms denote displaced persons who are currently aliens permanently residing in or strangers temporarily visiting the provinces; the meaning of *πάροικος* he finds to be 'stranger' or 'resident alien', the meaning of *παρεπίδημος* to be 'visiting stranger.' As such the words may well represent terms that were applied to persons who were differentiated from the natives in respect to their land of origin, ethnic or familial roots, or even their different views and opinions, language, property and religion.

Furthermore, and this is especially emphasized by Elliott, these persons did not *become* strangers and aliens by becoming Christians, but remained strangers and aliens:

1 Peter was directed to actual strangers and resident aliens who had become Christians. Their new religious affiliation was not the cause of their position in society though it did add to their difficulties in relating to their neighbors. It is precisely this combination of factors which best explains the disillusionment which the members felt. Attempting to improve their social lot through membership in the community which the Christian movement offered, they experienced instead only further social aggravation. Now they were demeaned not only as social strangers and aliens but for being "Christ-lackeys" as well.¹⁸

This emphasis on the social implications of these labels and the aspect of the strangers' and aliens' continuing status as deprived persons are central to Elliott. He admits, however, that the terms should not be read as social terms only; the words are used to describe religious as well as social circumstances.¹⁹ But it remains that the fundamental contrast in 1 Peter is not theological or cosmological but social. The Christians are set apart from and are in tension with their neighbors, and the social aspects are dominating in Elliott's expositions.

Elliott's study has been very influential:²⁰ some social connotations

¹⁸ Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 131–32.

¹⁹ See especially Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 42.

²⁰ One of those who follow him most closely is McKnight, *1 Peter. The NIV Application Commentary*, 24–25.47–52.

of the terms are not to be denied, and in 1 Peter they should be considered both theological and social terms. What has gained less acceptance is his thesis that the terms *πάροικος* and *παρεπίδημος* imply that the readers had been strangers even before they became Christians and remained thus.²¹ And he does not consider the social phenomenon of proselytes as a social model to the estrangement of these Christians.

Metaphorical Readings

The most prevalent and influential interpretation of these terms, and perhaps the oldest one as well, has been to read them as expressions of a pilgrimage theology: the Christians are pilgrims on earth; they do not have their real home here, but are on their way to their heavenly home. These characterizations of the Christian life are surely present in several other NT books; they are also to be found in other early Christian works (see Diognet 5:5f); they persist strongly in many modern interpretations,²² and they remain not least in many Christian songs and hymns, old and new.²³ Furthermore, proponents of this view also find it supported by the role of the characterization *ἐκλεκτοῖς* in 1:1 (compare with 2:9); it is the election of God that has made the Christians *paroikoi* and *parepidemoi*.²⁴ This election is grounded in God, in heaven. Hence, the Christians' life and social circumstances are to be interpreted in an eschatological perspective.

²¹ See e.g., the comments by Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 56–57.173–75.

²² Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter. The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, 135; Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 41.72.103; Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, 1990), 46–47; Lyder Brun, *Første Peters Brev* (Oslo: H. Aschehoug, 1949), 22,63,91.

²³ The main New Testament evidence drawn upon in support of this interpretation are Hebrews 11:9–10. 13–16; Phil 3:20 and Eph 2:19. Cf. further the Excursus 3 of Reinhard Feldmeier, entitled “‘Ich bin ein Gast auf Erden . . .’—Beobachtungen zur Wirkungsgeschichte der Kategorie der Fremde” in Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*, 211–18.

²⁴ Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 56.112.

Troy W. Martin argues strongly for a metaphorical understanding of these terms. He states that “there are many indications in 1 Peter that the recipients were not literally strangers or aliens. Since they are obviously Gentile, the only way to understand the phrase strangers of the dispersion in 1:1 is metaphorically.”²⁵ To him the sociological status²⁶ of the recipients was determined by the action of God according to 1 Pet 1:3 and 2:9. In spite of his emphasis on Diaspora as the controlling metaphor, he does not comment on the possibility that the Christians of 1 Peter might be considered in light of the similar or comparable conditions of Jewish proselytes. Because of this, the result of his exposition of the (in his terms) subcategories of *παρόικος* and *παρεπίδημος* is unsatisfactory.

One of the recent scholars dealing with the topic of estrangement in 1 Peter who also takes the works of Philo seriously as a possible *traditionsgeschichtliche* background is Reinhard Feldmeier. Surprisingly enough, however, he does not deal extensively with the phenomenon of proselytes/ proselytism as a possible background to the use of 1 Peter. Instead of integrating these aspects, he deals with and finds the experiences of the *people of Israel* as the primary conceptual and social background for the view of the Christian’s estrangement in 1 Peter. Furthermore, he suggests that the presentation of the estrangement (German: *Fremdlingschaft*) of the Petrine Christians has several roots; the author uses OT traditions, a usage that is also influenced by the use of these traditions in contemporary Judaism, especially Hellenistic Judaism; in addition, the view set forth in 1 Peter is marked by an eschatological sharpening, an influence which derives “aus dem Gesamtzusammenhang der urchristlichen Verkündigung.”²⁷

To Feldmeier, then, the descriptions of the Christians as *παρόικοι* and *παρεπίδημοι* function metaphorically. His understanding of the

²⁵ Martin, Troy W., *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 142.

²⁶ Martin here uses the expression “sociological status.” By this he presumably means “social status”. This is a flaw of expression that, alas, is to be found in many works of New Testament scholars.

²⁷ Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*, 103.

estrangement gains almost an existential cast; 1 Peter does not deal with the place of estrangement—that is, the world.²⁸ The Christians' estrangement is not derived from their relations to the world. They are estranged to nonbelievers because of their relationship to God and their membership in the Christian community; "die Fremdschaft hat so ihren eigentlichen Grund in der eschatologischen Existenz der christlichen Gemeinde."²⁹ The estrangement seems to be perceived by Feldmeier more as a theological statement than as a social reality, though the latter is not completely excluded. He retains it by stating that Christians' situation in the world is enlightened and explained by their relation to God, by their eschatological existence.

This view is correct as far as it goes, but I doubt that it pays enough attention to the social aspects of the perceived estrangement of the readers in the Graeco-Roman world of their time. A further consideration of the experiences of proselytes/proselytism would, I suggest, enrich the horizon of interpretation of the estrangement set forth in 1 Peter.

Some of those arguing for a metaphorical interpretation also admit social implications of the meaning of these terms. Knoch, for instance, states that the Christians are *παρόικος* and *παρεπίδημος* because they have no rights in the place where they are living; they are only strangers and guests. This estrangement is also demonstrated by their way of living.³⁰

²⁸ See p. 178: "Der Verzicht des 1 Peter auf ein verobjektiviertes Gegenüber als negative Folie ist aufschlussreich. Denn er zeigt, dass der 1 Peter das Selbstverständnis der Christen als Fremde nicht in erster Linie aus ihrer Entfremdung zu der sie umgebenden Gesellschaft ableitet."

²⁹ Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*, 179.

³⁰ See Otto Knoch, *Der Erste und Zweite Petrusbrief. Der Judasbrief*, Regensburger Neues Testament (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1990), 37.38.52.71. Cf. p. 38: "Die Christen passen sich dem Geist und Lebensstil ihrer heidnischen Umwelt nicht an, weil sie ihre Heimat bei Gott, dem Vater, und bei Jesus Christus, dem Auferstandenen, haben."

Preliminary Conclusions and Further Suggestions

Our brief review has demonstrated that the views concerning the meaning and connotations of the terms *πάροικος* and *παρεπίδημος* can be seen as exhibiting a preference for either a theological (that is, a metaphorical), or a social reading. Elliott's study represented a kind of shift from a primarily theological reading of these terms as denoting pilgrims to a reading influenced by the social world and the social connotations of these words in other contexts. Some scholars want to argue a closer characterization of the readers in light of these terms—for example, van Unnik and McKnight, who propose that the recipients had really been proselytes or God-fearers—while other scholars are more indecisive concerning their exact background. Van Unnik's use of Philo will be further pursued below.³¹

There is little reflection or discussion on the nature of metaphor in these works presented above; T.W. Martin is an exception to this general lack of hermeneutical discussion. He deals rather briefly with the nature of metaphor, however, drawing on the understanding of K. Berger. Martin's comments on the Diaspora as the source domain and the Christian community as the target domain of the main metaphor *Diaspora* and its submetaphors are, admittedly, very pertinent. He nevertheless does not see proselytism as relevant for the understanding of *πάροικος* and *παρεπίδημος*.³²

In general, following M. Black, one might say there are at least three different views of the function of metaphors.³³ These views

³¹ Cf. Malherbe's positive assessment: "W.C. van Unnik has shown that the language of Jewish proselytism is used frequently in 1 Peter. . . he has demonstrated that the hellenistic Jewish writings, especially their statements relating to proselytes, contributes to the clarification of the letter." Abraham J. Malherbe, "Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung. Teil II: Principat Band 26*, Hrg Wolfgang Haase (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1992), 307–08.

³² Martin, Troy W., *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 144–61.

³³ See here e.g., M. Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca London: Cornell University Press, 1962), 25–47.

are related to how a metaphor functions. One view may be called *the substitution view*. Here a term is substituted for another without any further meaning being added or emphasized. A second view is often called the *comparison view*. Here a metaphor might present some underlying analogy or comparison. The third view is perhaps the most interesting, called the *interaction view*. The metaphors belonging to this group function as a filter, clarifying or emphasizing particular aspects of a term. To understand the exact role of metaphor here, it is also important to know its grounding, or, to use Black's phrase, its "system of associated commonplaces."³⁴ Any such metaphor suppresses some aspects, while emphasizing others; in other words it organizes our understanding. It functions as a kind of filter. To understand the implications of these metaphors, it is important to know their wider field, including their social grounding. Hence, metaphors should not be interpreted apart from their social context—that is their source of domain.

To Lakoff and Johnson, metaphors are pervasive in everyday life, and our ordinary conceptual system "in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature."³⁵ Without subscribing to all aspects of Lakoff and Johnson's general view of language as being primarily symbolical and metaphorical,³⁶ I nevertheless find several aspects of their view of metaphors helpful and illuminating for understanding the roles of metaphors in a text such as 1 Peter. Metaphors, according to Lakoff and Johnson, can be defined as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another."³⁷ Metaphors can, furthermore, be categorized in three groups: *Ontological* metaphors, which "are ways of viewing events, activities, emotions, ideas, etc., as entities and substances";³⁸ *orientational* metaphors, which are metaphors that give a concept a

³⁴ Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, 40.

³⁵ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors we Live By*, 3.

³⁶ See especially their Chapter 24 about *Truth* (pp. 159–184).

³⁷ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors we Live By*, 5.

³⁸ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors we Live By*, 25.

spatial orientation;³⁹ and finally, *structural* metaphors, in which “one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another.”⁴⁰ Structural metaphors, which are the ones relevant here, are more dependent on the culture to which they belong than other metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson speak about the grounding of structural metaphors.⁴¹ Such metaphors cannot be understood apart from cultural grounding, that is, source domain. Hence, when metaphors have experiential groundings, we ought to be on the lookout for their source domain, the relevant aspects of the culture concerned providing background for their images. This is because structural metaphors correspond systematically to our experience. They emerge naturally in a culture, because what they highlight corresponds so closely to the experience of the persons involved. But they are not only grounded in physical and cultural experiences, they also influence experience and actions. Hence to understand the particular use of the terms *παροικος* and *παρεπίδημος* as metaphors in 1 Peter, it is important to research their social grounding in the Diaspora.

As stated above, Martin has characterized the Diaspora as the source domain for the terms *παροικος* and *παρεπίδημος*. According to the hypothesis adopted in the present study, ‘diaspora’ should be narrowed down even further to mean Diaspora Jewish proselytes and proselytism. In the view of the author of 1 Peter, the Christian recipients of his letter were to consider themselves as undergoing the same experiences as Jewish proselytes were as *paroikos* and *parepidemos*. Hence the Diaspora-Jews’ understanding of proselytes to Judaism is important to our understanding of these issues in 1 Peter. But first we have to look into the linguistic evidence for our view that the terms *παροικος* and *παρεπίδημος* are proselyte-related terms.

³⁹ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors we Live By*, 14.

⁴⁰ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors we Live By*, 14.

⁴¹ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors we Live By*, 61–68.

*The Literary and Social Background of the
Terms Paroikos and Parepidemos*

Old Testament Background: Masoretic Text and Septuagint

The use of the terms πάροιχος and παρεπίδημος in ancient Jewish and early Christian literature is clearly related to the Hebrew Bible and its descriptions of the stranger among the Israelites. The central terms in the Hebrew Bible in this case are גר and the phrase גר וחושב. The word גר occurs 92 times in the Hebrew Bible, denoting a ‘stranger,’ ‘sojourner,’ ‘alien.’⁴² According to K.G. Kuhn,⁴³ we find in the Hebrew Bible “two distinct classes of aliens in the land and these are distinguished linguistically. First 1. there are foreigners present only for a time, e.g., travellers, and for these the word is נכרי (‘stranger,’ Deut 14:21; 15:3; 23:21; 29:21). . . . Then 2. there is the alien who resides temporarily or permanently in the land; this is the גר (e.g., Exod 12:49; Deut 23:8; 2 Ch 2:16).” The נכרי is without fellowship with Israel and have no rights or protection; the גר, however, stands under protection of both God and the people he/she dwells among and thus has religious rights in Israel. The term גר is not, however, univocally used in the Hebrew Bible; sometimes it seems to denote the stranger living more or less temporarily in Israel, in other texts it seems to describe the resident alien, approaching the status of the later ‘proselyte’. Some further features of the use of גר might also be mentioned:

1) Not only are incoming strangers described as גר, but sometimes also Israel (for example, Gen 15:13: “your offspring shall be strangers in a land that is not theirs”; Exod 22:20: “you were strangers in the land of Egypt”; 23:9) or particular Israelites, such

⁴² See further A.H. Konkel, “rwn Dwell as Stranger,” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Paternoster Press, 1997), 836–39; Art. προσήλυτος, TDNT VI, 727–744; THAT I, sp. 411; and Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*, 39–51.

⁴³ TDNT VI, p. 728.

as Abraham (Gen 23:4: “I am a stranger and sojourner residing among you”).

2) In some texts the term גֵר is used to describe the Israelites’ relation to JHWH; they are aliens before him: “The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants” (גֵרִים וְחוֹשְׁבִים), cf. Lev 25:23; 1 Chron 29:15; Ps 39:12; 119:19). Most scholars seem to read these expressions metaphorically.⁴⁴

3) The favorable attitudes of the Israelites toward the strangers within their gates are also legitimized by reminders of their own situation when sojourning in Egypt: “You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the Land of Egypt” (Exod 22:21; 23:9; Lev 19:34; Deutr 10:19).⁴⁵

Reading the Bible historically in light of modern tradition- and source-critical theories reveals that especially in the later strata the גֵר is more and more described as a stranger religiously attached to Israel—that is, close to what we call a ‘proselyte’.⁴⁶ The Hebrew Bible does not however, distinguish linguistically between these meanings because proselytism was not very well developed at that time. Furthermore, the ancient Jews and early Christians did not read their Scriptures in light of source critical theories but as a whole. Hence, the later translations become interesting for seeing how these texts were understood in later and socially different situations. The social situation of the Greek translation, the Septuagint (LXX), is different from most of the socially situations of the books of the Hebrew Bible. The translation of the LXX is also influenced by the context in many places. The LXX is most probably the text-type

⁴⁴ Cf. e.g., Konkel, *DOTTE*, p. 837; Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*, 45–51. Elliott (*A Home*, 28–29), emphasizes also the social aspect of these expressions.

⁴⁵ Karl Ludwig Schmidt, “Israels Stellung zu den Fremdlingen und Beisassen und Israels Wissen um seine Fremdling- und Beisassenschaft,” *Judaica* 1 (1945): 269–96.

⁴⁶ This aspect is completely missing in Elliott’s exposition, see esp. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 24–37.

used by Philo and the early Christians. Hence its translations of נִי become very important for understanding how writers as Philo and the author of 1 Peter might have understood the terms concerned.

In the LXX then, the Hebrew term נִי is translated either πάροικος or προσήλυτος. Προσήλυτος is used 77 times; in 14 instances the LXX has other words for נִי; in 11 of them πάροικος. Πάροικος is also the usual translation of נִי תושב.⁴⁷

W.C. Allen finds that προσήλυτος is not synonymous with πάροικος, that it does not mean ‘stranger’ or ‘sojourner’ only, but that its original meaning, as far as the extant literature enables us to judge, was “proselyte.”⁴⁸ His reading might give the impression that πάροικος is used consistently for נִי to denote a stranger, and προσήλυτος consistently as a translation for נִי to denote a proselyte, but this is not quite so, as the following examples demonstrate. The texts demonstrate a certain variety in the translations of נִי, indicating that the translators did not always differentiate between a πάροικος and a προσήλυτος.

1) As in the Hebrew Bible, not only strangers from outside, but also Israelites are called πάροικοι. Of the 11 occurrences of πάροικος, Gen 15:13 denotes Israel in Egypt, Gen 23:4 Abraham at Schechem, Exod 2:22; 23:3 Moses in Midian and Deutr 23:8 Israel in Egypt. When describing the nation or members of the nations, πάροικος is preferred,⁴⁹ not προσήλυτος, and Abraham is described as a model πάροικος.

In 1 Chr 29:15, however, at least one variant text has προσήλυτος instead of πάροικος. Furthermore, in 2 Sam 1:13 too, the Hebrew נִי is translated as πάροικος, but a textual variant has προσήλυτος. In three other texts, the term προσήλυτος is used instead of πάροικος

⁴⁷ See TDNT VI, p. 731. Furthermore W.C. Allen, “On the Meaning of PROSELYTOS in the Septuagint,” *The Expositor* 10 (1894): 264–75; Moses Chin, “A Heavenly Home for the Homeless. Aliens and Strangers in 1 Peter,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 42 (1991): 96–112; Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*, 51–52.

⁴⁸ Allen, “On the Meaning of PROSELYTOS in the Septuagint,” 266.

⁴⁹ Chin, “A Heavenly Home for the Homeless. Aliens and Strangers in 1 Peter,” 101.

for Israel (Lev 25:23.35; Deutr 1:16). We see here that some scribes, at least, could exchange πάροικος for προσήλυτος.

2) In the four passages that most often are interpreted metaphorically, the LXX has προσήλυτος and πάροικος or πάροικος and παρεπίδημος (Lev 25:23; Ps 39:12 (LXX 38:12)) for נִכְּחִי וְנִשְׁכַּח, or πάροικος for נִכְּחִי (Ps 119:19; 1 Chron 29:15). In the first of these we have προσήλυτος and πάροικος together, in Ps 39:12 this has been changed to πάροικος and παρεπίδημος. This should be considered relevant for the expression in 1 Pet 1:1.17. Again we see that the translators have used the terms interchangeably, and the term προσήλυτος is included, and used interchangeably with πάροικος or παρεπίδημος.

3) The legitimations for the Israelites' concern for the strangers are said to have been their own experiences as aliens in Egypt. What terms are used for their position in Egypt? We should expect πάροικος, but this is not the case. In all the texts concerned (Exod 22:21; 23:9; Lev 19:34; Deut 10:19), the Greek term used is προσήλυτος. This is often explained as due to the fact that the passage deals with proselytes, and thus the same word is also used for the Israelites.⁵⁰ But this might be to beg the question.

4) In 1 Pet 2:11 we have the terms πάροικος and παρεπίδημος (see also παρεπίδημος in 1:1). These 2 terms are also found coupled in the LXX; in the 10 occasions where נִכְּחִי is used with נִשְׁכַּח we find that they are translated πάροικος καὶ παρεπίδημος (Gen 23:4; Ps 39:13). Two times we have only πάροικος (Lev 25:6.45). In the remaining instances we have προσήλυτος-πάροικος. This phenomenon triggers two conclusions: first, a distinction between נִכְּחִי and נִשְׁכַּח should not be pushed; neither should their equivalents πάροικος and παρεπίδημος be considered too diverse. Second, while there generally seems to be a difference between πάροικος and προσήλυτος, this distinction is not always strictly upheld when it comes to the נִכְּחִי וְנִשְׁכַּח.

⁵⁰ See Allen, 269; Feldmeier, p. 52, note 96.

These observations on the use of גֵּר in the Hebrew Bible and the terms used to translate in the LXX suggest a need for further research on the meaning of these terms in 1 Peter. They clearly indicate that πάροικος and παρεπίδημος are proselyte-related terms. One might say that, while there generally seems to be a distinction upheld between πάροικος and προσήλυτος, this is not always consistent: there is some inter-changeability. Furthermore, it is important to realize that προσήλυτος is a relevant translation of גֵּר, and that προσήλυτος is sometimes used when one might expect πάροικος. Accordingly, the possibility that the πάροικος in 1 Peter is part of a proselyte terminology should be further investigated. Hence, we now turn to the works of Philo of Alexandria.⁵¹

Strangers and Proselytes in the Works of Philo

In the works preserved from the Jewish philosopher and theologian Philo of Alexandria, we find that both the noun πάροικος and the verbal forms are used 16 times respectively; the derived form παροίκησις is used 3 times (Leg. 3,244; Sacr. 43; Congr. 20), and παροικία and παροικίζω are used one time each (Conf. 79; Spec. 4,93). Παρεπίδημος is used only once (Conf. 79 = Gen 23:4). The other word used in the LXX for the Hebrew גֵּר; the term προσήλυτος, is used 8 times.⁵² Philo has, however, much more to say about ‘proselytes’, but he seems to prefer the words ἔπῃλυσ, ἐπῃλύτης, ἐπῃλutos; total used 27 times.⁵³

When considering how Philo interprets the Hebrew Scriptures with which we are concerned here, we soon become involved in the par-

⁵¹ Elliott deals very summarily with Philo, finding only an allegorical use in his works; see Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 31–32.

⁵² Cher. 108, 119; Somn. 2,273; Spec. 1,51, 308; QE 2:2 (3 times).

⁵³ See further TDNT VI, pp. 731–732 R.A. Bitter, *Vreemdelingschap bij Philo van Alexandrie. Een Onderzoek naar de betekenis van PAROIKOS*, Ph.D. diss. (N.p., 1982), 31ff; Ellen Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo's Thought. Israel, Jews, and Proselytes*, Brown Judaic Series 290/Studia Philonica Monographs 2 (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1996), 195–99.

ticular theology of Philo, especially his view of humans, which exhibits both Stoic and Platonic influences. We cannot deal with all of these aspects, especially not as they are to be found in his more allegorical explanations of the Hebrew Scriptures,⁵⁴ but we can provide a brief sketch of how Philo conceptualizes and theologizes about the phenomenon of strangers and proselytes in his works.

Allegorical Interpretations

Philo's expositions in his so-called allegorical commentaries are primarily symbolic or allegorical; in the *Expositio* however, he deals more directly with the stranger's and proselytes in the Jewish communities, and their social world.⁵⁵

As in the Hebrew Bible and in the LXX, humans are described as proselytes and strangers in relation to God (Lev 25:23f). Philo addresses this topic in his treatise on the cherubs (*Cher.* 108ff). Here he fleshes out his view that the essence of man, the soul, is not from below but from God. Hence, in relation to each other, all human beings enjoy equal honor and equal rights, but to God they are aliens and sojourners (*ἐπηλύτων καὶ παροίκων*): "For each of us has come into this city as into a foreign city, in which before our birth we had no part, and in this city he does but sojourn, until he has exhausted his appointed span of life" (*Cher.* 120). God alone is the true citizen, and all created beings are sojourners and aliens (cf. *Cher.* 108; *Confus.* 79ff; *Heres* 267). In fact, the wise person, who is the focus here, shall not consider his body his true home; only fools do that. The wise person—that is, the lover of virtue—is not granted by God to dwell in a body as his or her homeland, but only to sojourn there as in a foreign country; Philo here refers to Gen 15:13, where Abraham is told that his offspring will live as strangers among men.

⁵⁴ See here Bitter, *Vreemdelingschap Bij Philo*.

⁵⁵ On Philo's work in general, see now Peder Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria, An Exegete for His Time*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 86 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997).

The aspect of strangeness and alienship is further exemplified by Philo in his descriptions of the wise person's relation to the basic studies, the ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία (Leg. 3,244; Cong. 22ff; Sacr. 43f). These studies are not to be considered most important; wise people must estrange themselves from them, proceeding to the higher wisdom, which is the study of the Law of Moses.

The figure of Abraham as a stranger is also used to describe the wise person's relation to the present world (Confus. 79ff). Abraham said he was a stranger and a sojourner (πάροικος καὶ παρεπίδημος; Gen 23:4), and so were Jacob (Gen 47:4; Confus. 80), and Moses (Exod 2:22; Confus. 81).

We saw above that the LXX translated the Hebrew word נָכְרִי as πάροικος or προσήλυτος. When Philo finds προσήλυτος in his Greek *Grundlage*, he retains the term and reads it as denoting 'proselyte'. As pointed out above, he himself, however, seems to prefer the words ἔπηλυσ, ἐπηλύτης, ἐπήλυτος for proselyte; literally, these words denote 'incomer'. A proselyte is for Philo one who has come into a new commonwealth; the Jewish people. The closeness of a πάροικος to 'proselyte' is demonstrated in several ways in Philo's works, not least in his way of depicting Abraham as a model proselyte on the basis of his status as a πάροικος in the Scriptures. We shall have a closer look at how Philo describes the proselytes in his non-allegorical writings.

Proselytes in the Exposition

His exposition in *Questions and Answers on Exodus* can serve as a point of departure. Here he starts out with a question based on Exod 22:21: "Why does (Scripture) in admonishing "Thou shalt not oppress a sojourner," add, "for ye were sojourners in the land of the Egyptians"?⁵⁶ Philo's exposition makes it clear that he here is dealing with proselytes. First he deals with the issue of circumcision; then he asks:

⁵⁶ Cf. Exod 22:20: καὶ προσήλυτον οὐ κακώσετε οὐδεμὴ θλίψετε αὐτόν, ἦτε γὰρ προσήλυτοι ἐν γῇ Αἰγύπτῳ.

what is the mind of the proselyte (προσηλύτον) if not alienation from belief in many gods and familiarity with honouring the one God and Father of all? In the second place, some call strangers ‘newcomers’ (ἐπήλυδας). But strangers are also those who have run to the truth, not in the same way as those who made their sojourn in Egypt. For these are newcomers to the land (ἐπήλυδας χώρας), while those are (newcomers) to laws and customs. But the common name of “newcomers” is ascribed to both (τὸ δε ὄνομα κοινὸν ἑκατέρων ἐπηλύδων).

Philo here deals with a passage from the Hebrew Bible that exhorts the Israelites to behave well towards the strangers among them for the reason that the Israelites themselves had been strangers in Egypt. Already the LXX used the term προσήλυτος here, and Philo does not discuss this terminology but describes what a proselyte means to him: one who has left a belief in many gods and run to the truth, that is, to the Jewish faith. Philo has several other descriptions of the proselytes, not just theological,⁵⁷ but social as well.⁵⁸

All of these descriptions are important for an exposition of the social conditions of the early Christians as described in 1 Peter, and we shall return to these issues below when dealing with 1 Peter.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Philo’s conception of the proselytes as a kind of stranger is his expositions of Tamar and, especially Abraham, as models and prototypes for proselytes. This aspect indeed also reveals the conceptual closeness of strangers and proselytes in the mind of Philo.⁵⁹ While Abraham in the Hebrew Bible is described as a “ger toschab” (Gen 23:4, cf. 15:13 on his descendants as גר), an expression LXX renders πάροικος καὶ

⁵⁷ Contra TDNT VI, p. 732.

⁵⁸ Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo’s Thought. Israel, Jews, and Proselytes*, 195–219; Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria, An Exegete for His Time*, 206–24; Scot McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 38–40.43–44.69–70.

⁵⁹ Another example from Philo on how “strangers” may be read as “proselytes” is the description of the peoples that followed Israel out of Egypt. In the Hebrew text of Exod 12:38, and in the version of the LXX these are described as a mixed company of people; in the Targum Neofiti Exod. 12,38, cf. Targum

παρεπίδημος (cp. Confus. 79, cf. 15:13: *πάροικον*), Philo describes Abraham as a proselyte. His departure from Chaldea is described and explicated in several texts (Abr.; Virt. 212–220; Praem. 58); some containing elaborate allegorizations of his travels;⁶⁰ the one given in Virt. 212–220 is most closely related to a proselyte (see also Abr. 60–67). Philo's conclusion runs thus (Virt. 219):

he is the standard of nobility for all proselytes (οὗτος ἅπασιν ἐπιλύταις εὐγενείας ἐστὶ κανὼν), who abandoning the ignobility of strange laws and monstrous customs which assigned divine honours to stocks and stones and soulless things in general, have come to settle in a better land, in a commonwealth full of true life and vitality, with truth as its director and president (cf. Abr. 67).

His road of travel from a vain faith in idols is thus depicted as typical for those who come over to the Jews as proselytes; from strangeness to knowledge of the One.⁶¹

Further Conclusions

We have seen that when the LXX translates the Hebrew term *גֵּר*, there is much interpretation involved, since the term sometimes is translated *πάροικος*, and other times *προσήλυτος*. Furthermore, there is not complete consistency in the way the two Greek terms are used as translations of the Hebrew term. There is some interchangeability, and sometimes we get *προσήλυτος* where one might have expected

Pseudo-Jonathan and Targum Onqelos, these are understood as proselytes. This view is adopted by Philo too, and expanded upon. See further here McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period*, 92–96.

⁶⁰ In the allegorical writings, see Leg. 3,244; Cher. 4; Deter. 159; Gig. 63; Migr. 1–12; 176–195 et al., cf. Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria, An Exegete for His Time*, 217–18.

⁶¹ Without using the specific terminology of proselytes, Tamar is also described as model proselyte in comparable terms. Tamar (Gen 38) passed from profound darkness to truth, deserting to the “camp of piety at the risk of her life, caring little for its preservation” (Virt. 221f).

πάροικος, and vice versa. The main point is, however, that the translator(s) considered both terms to be faithful renderings of the Hebrew term.

When Philo finds προσήλυτος in his Greek “Vorlage”, he retains it; in other cases he seems to have preferred other terms for proselytes. His understanding of πάροικος is also close to that of ‘proselyte’, as is most explicitly demonstrated in his exposition of the stranger Abraham as the model proselyte. In the next section we shall draw upon these findings of πάροικος and παρεπίδημος as terms closely related to the other terms for ‘proselytes’, and read the social descriptions of the early Christians in 1 Peter in light of Philo’s characterizations of the Jewish proselytes.

*The Social Conditions of the Christians in 1 Peter in Light of
Diaspora Jewish Descriptions of their Proselytes*

In this section we shall here have a closer look at passages and terms used by the author of 1 Peter to depict and characterize his readers. My suggestion is that several of these passages should be read against the background of Diaspora-Jewish descriptions of proselytes. This does not primarily mean that the author considered the readers to have been former proselytes but that, in his perception of the social world of his Christian recipients, their social situation had become similar to that of Jewish proselytes.

The Recipients as πάροικοι and παρεπίδημοι

The first passages to be commented on are the descriptions of the recipients in the introductory section of 1 Peter and the parallel characterizations in 1:17 and 2:11:

1:1: ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς

1:17: ἐν φόβῳ τὸν τῆς παροικίας ὑμῶν χρόνον ἀναστράφητε,

2:11: Ἀγαπητοί, παρακαλῶ ὡς παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους

The terms underlined here are perhaps some of the most discussed when scholars deal with the social location of the recipients. The use of these terms by the author of 1 Peter suggests that he considers them not as negative terms, but as characterizations of honor; the characterization ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς in the introduction of the letter is strange if it was a derogatory characterization; characterizations of recipients in introductory sections are generally made in positive terms.⁶² Furthermore, used as introductory characterizations, they probably represent a typical description of the recipients; not something occasional or temporary, but typical and enduring. One might then ask: Do the statements say something about *when* this situation of a παρεπίδημος came about? 1 Peter 1:1 seems to locate the beginning of the recipients' situation at the time of God's election.⁶³ Hence, the recipients were not παρεπίδημοι before they became Christians but entered this state at their conversion. Elliott's suggestion that they had been παροῖκοι καὶ παρεπίδημοι even before they became Christians as well as afterwards is not the most likely view.⁶⁴ Furthermore, in light of 1:17, their state of παροικία seems to be considered temporary. This suggestion is strengthened when we consider 1 Pet 4:2–3; these verses seem to imply that the Christians had not been marginalized before their conversion, but had been integrated among "the Gentiles."⁶⁵ Their present condition of παροῖκοι καὶ παρεπίδημοι is, then, something new and central to the admonitions of the author.

Furthermore, the metaphorical nature of the description in 1:1 is suggested by the ὥς of 2:11 since ὥς is a particle regularly used in

⁶² Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*, 207.

⁶³ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 6; Olsson, *Första Petrusbrevet*, 19–20.

⁶⁴ Bengt Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 94.

⁶⁵ Birger Olsson, "A Social-Scientific Criticism of 1 Peter," in *Texts and Contexts. Biblical Texts in Their Textual and Situational Contexts. Essays in Honor of Lars Hartman*, edited by Tord Fornberg and David Hellholm (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1995), 827–46; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 56.

1 Peter to introduce a metaphorical expression,⁶⁶ and “its association with “elect” and “diaspora” indicates that its origin lies in the story of Abraham rather than in the political situation of the first century.”⁶⁷ I think van Unnik and Elliott make a comparable mistake. Both find *one* main meaning in the terms—proselytes or deprived marginalized alien persons, respectively—and both presume that their description fit all of the recipients of the letter. One might ask: How much did the author know about his readers? If the letter were sent to the vast regions enumerated in the introduction (1:1), how could he possibly know all, or even most of them?

Read in light of the Abraham story and the further conceptualization of Abraham as a model proselyte, it is probable that the author of 1 Peter did not envisage his readers as actual (former) proselytes but that their social conditions were considered by the author to be comparable with the social condition of Jewish proselytes. Accordingly, the descriptions should not be read in light of an ideology of heavenly pilgrimage on earth or a socially deprived situation of aliens and temporary residents in general but in light of the descriptions of the social situation of Diaspora Jewish proselytes.

The Perceived Conditions of the Recipients in Light of Philo's Descriptions of Proselytes

W.C. van Unnik has argued that several characterizations of the recipients in 1 Peter indicate that they were actual (former) proselytes. Several of his arguments do not hold up to closer scrutiny, while others might very well point to proselyte descriptions without indicating that they were actual former proselytes.⁶⁸ According to my reading they only confirm the importance of proselyte descriptions

⁶⁶ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 56.

⁶⁷ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 82.

⁶⁸ A. Malherbe states that “W.C. van Unnik has shown that the language of Jewish proselytism is used frequently in 1 Peter.” See Malherbe, “Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament,” 307.

as relevant for the authors understanding of the social conditions of his readers.

ὡς τέκνα ὑπακοῆς

van Unnik has suggested that the expression in 1 Pet 1:22 about obedience (Τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας, see also 1:14; ὡς τέκνα ὑπακοῆς and εἰς ὑπακοὴν in 1:2)⁶⁹ belongs to the conceptual field of proselyte descriptions. I admit that, in a parallel situation Paul considered the obedience of his converts as a central part of the goal of his mission (cf. Rom 1:5; 15:18; 16:19.26). Obedience is, however, such a central part both of Israel's obligations to God and Christians', that it is hard to see any specific proselyte indications in the use of obedience here. Van Unnik overstates his case when reading this expression as indicating that the recipients were proselytes.

τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς.
(1 Pet 2:9)

1 Pet 2:9 is a theological description much more related to proselytes than the one discussed above. Various proposals have been given regarding the background of this description.⁷⁰ L. Goppelt surmises that "In 1 Pet 2:9, however, the tradition-historical starting point is probably the corresponding characterization of conversion in the Qumran writings, which stands in a similar context; 1 QH 4:5.6.23."⁷¹ Closest to the view expressed in the present study

⁶⁹ Unnik, W.C. van, "The Redemption in 1 Peter I 18–19 and the Problem of the First Epistle of Peter," 60.

⁷⁰ E.G. Selwyn states that "the phrase in 1 Peter ii.9b is without exact parallel elsewhere, and is of striking poetical quality. The phrase may be the author's own, or it may be a part of a Christian hymn which he is quoting." F.W. Beare correctly pinpoints that the contrast of light and darkness is not peculiar to the religious vocabulary of the New Testament, "but is widely employed in the contemporary paganism." See Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 280; Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter. The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, 132.

⁷¹ Goppelt, Leonhard, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 150, note 67.

is that of N. Brox. He notes that “Es gibt Indizien dafür, dass das Motiv im Zusammenhang mit dem Proselytismus des Judentums üblich war.”⁷²

He provides no further evidence, however, than a reference to an article by van Unnik. In this article, dealing with “Christianity according to I Peter”,⁷³ van Unnik states that the epistle “uses expressions which are closely parallel to those used in connection with proselytes among the Jews”, a statement he exemplifies by saying that “Philo says that they have come out of the darkness of paganism to the radiant light (cf. ii 9)” (p. 115).

In Philo’s works, the Gentiles are characterized by polytheism (which to Philo is atheism), and darkness and the absence of light prevent them from attending to the vision of God. Israel, on the other hand, can be characterized as “ὁὐ μὴν τυφλῇ διανοίᾳ, ἀλλ’ ὁξὺ καθορῶντες”: “with no blind understanding, but with keenest vision” (Agric 81). In Virt. 179 Philo says concerning the proselytes that “we must rejoice with them, as if, though blind at the first they had recovered their sight and had come from the deepest darkness to behold the most radiant light.” Tamar is described as

⁷² Cf Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 106 See also Olsson, *Första Petrusbrevet*, 72 “Möjliga judisk missionsterminologi.” Cf. H. Conzelmann in TDNT VII, p. 441: “1 Peter 2:9 is an example of the conversion style adopted from Judaism, cf. Ac 26:18”; *ibid.*, p. 441: “Conversion is illumination, a transition from darkness to light. This figurative description of conversion derives from Judaism (JosAs) and was widespread in Christianity, Ac 26:18; 1 The 5:4f; Eph 5:8; 1 Peter 2:9; 2 Cor 4:6.” Elliott (John H. Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy: An Exegetical Examination of 1 Peter 2:4–10 and the Phrase Basileion Hierateuma*, Novum Testamentum Supplements 12 [Leiden: Brill, 1966], 43) states, however, that “These words suggest an Isaianic origin, though the terms “to call” and “light” in the NT era had developed into such common images for election and salvation that we would do best here to think of a common christian parlance”; cf. also Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*, 42 “The darkness/light imagery of 2.9 is already hackneyed in pre-Christian Judaism, as the abundant parallels in Isaiah, the Psalms etc., indicate so as to preclude the possibility of demonstrating literary dependence.”

⁷³ W.C. van Unnik, “Christianity According to 1 Peter,” in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W.C. Van Unnik Part Two*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980), 79–83.

“passing, as it were, from profound darkness she was able to glimpse a little ray of truth, she deserted to the camp of piety at the risk of her life, caring little for its preservation if it were not to be a good life” (Virt. 221). Abraham is described as the first, the model proselyte who saw the ray and made his transition out of darkness into the light of God:

Then opening the soul’s eye as though after profound sleep, and beginning to see the pure beam instead of the deep darkness (διόξας τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὄμμα καὶ καθαρὰν αὐγὴν ἀντισκότους βαθέος βλέπειν ἀρξάμενος), he followed the ray and discerned what he had not beheld before, a charioteer and pilot presiding over the world and directing in safety his own work, assuming the charge and superintendence of that work and of all such parts of it as are worthy of the divine care (Abr. 70).

A similar view is also represented in the novel about Joseph and Aseneth. The dominating view of conversion is here spelled out by Joseph in his prayer for Aseneth (8:9f):

Lord God of my father Israel, the Powerful One of Jacob, who gave life to all (things), and called (them) from the darkness to the light, and from error to truth, and from the death to life (ὁ ζωοποιήσας τὰ πάντα καὶ καλέσας ἀπὸ τοῦ σκότους εἰς τὸ φῶς καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς πλάνης εἰς τὴν ἀλήθειαν καὶ ἀπὸ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν), you Lord, bless this virgin and renew her by your spirit and form her anew by your hidden hand, and make her alive again by your life. . . .

Conversion is here described as a transition from darkness into light as well as from error to truth, from death to life. The same aspects recur in 12:1f when Aseneth blesses the angel who came to convey to her the heavenly message of her acceptance with God: “Blessed be the Lord your God the Most High who sent you to rescue me from the darkness and to bring me up from the foundation of the abyss, and blessed be your name forever” (15:12). Furthermore, as heaven is characterized by light (14:9), and God is the one “who created all (things) and . . . brought the invisible (things) out into light” (12:1), those who turn to him become partakers of a recreation and are “called out from darkness into his marvelous light”

(1 Pet. 2:9). Hence, one need not go to the Qumran scrolls to find the conceptual and social background for the description in 1 Pet 2:9b; closer parallels to 1 Peter are found in the particular Diaspora-Jewish ways of describing the transition made by Gentiles when they converted to Judaism. Words such as are used in 1 Pet 2:9 seem to indicate that the author had proselyte characterizations and proselyte conditions in mind when he wrote his letter.

It is when we consider the *social* descriptions of the recipients, however, that we are closest to the world of proselytes. Hence, we shall now have a further look at what such a hypothesis might represent for understanding the social conditions of the recipients of 1 Peter as described by its author. Having established that the notions of strangers and aliens constitute parts of the background for the biblical concept of proselytes and that Philo in particular draws on these texts, we shall provide a closer look at the social descriptions of proselytes in Philo's works. By reading the descriptions in 1 Peter in light of Philo's characterizations as part of the author's source domain for his metaphors, furthermore, we should presumably have a better understanding of how the author of 1 Peter considered the social conditions of his readers. Considering the descriptions of proselytes in Philo, we find that the following aspects are emphasized: leaving polytheism for monotheism; leaving one's country, family and kinsfolk and becoming enemies of families and friends at the risk of one's lives; and entering a community of fictive kinship and brotherly love.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Cf. here especially Borgen, "The Early Church and the Hellenistic Synagogue." Borgen has many valuable observations in this article, but he does not focus on 1 Peter except for one brief reference. See also his several other studies in this volume and in Peder Borgen, *Early Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996).

Leaving the Polytheism for Monotheism

As a Jew devoted to the Hebrew Scriptures, Philo without doubt perceived the issue of becoming a proselyte as leaving the many gods in preference for the Only One, the one and only truly existing God. To Philo monotheism was not disputable.⁷⁵ Accordingly, the proselytes are repeatedly described as people who are coming “to truth and the honouring of One who alone is worthy of honour, and by leaving the mythical fables and multiplicity of sovereigns” (Spec. 4,178); they are leaving “their customs and the temples and images of their gods, and the tributes and honours paid to them. . . . from idle fables to the clear vision of truth and the worship of the one and truly existing God” (Virt. 102). The issue of the transference from the world of polytheism to that of monotheism is especially emphasized in the descriptions of Abraham and Tamar as model proselytes. Abraham⁷⁶ is said to have been the son of an astrologer. But realizing that this context would hinder his progression to the One, he left his “native country, his race and paternal home, knowing that if he stayed the delusions of the polytheistic creed would stay within him and render it impossible to discover the One” (Virt. 214). Abraham is therefore the first person spoken of as believing in God, and he is the model of those “abandoning the ignobility of strange laws and monstrous customs which assigned divine honours to stocks and stones and soulless things in general” (Virt. 219). Tamar is described as among those who “became schooled in the knowledge of the monarchical principle by which the world is governed” (Virt. 220), and as leaving her paternal place for a better home.

We find this emphasis in several other Jewish works dealing with proselytes, for example in *Joseph and Aseneth*, and in early Christian

⁷⁵ G. Delling, *MONOS THEOS*, in *Studien zum Neuen Testament und zum hellenistischen Judentum: Gesammelte Aufsätze 1950–1968* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 391–400.

⁷⁶ On Abraham, see also D. Georgi, *Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief*, WMANT 11 (Neukirchen, 1964), 63–82; G. Mayer, “Aspekte des Abrahambildes in der hellenistisch-jüdischen Literatur,” *Evangelische Theologie*, no. 32 (1972): 118–27.

works such as 1 Thess 1:9; Gal 4:8; Acts 15:19. In 1 Peter the readers are admonished not to indulge in, among other things, “lawless idolatry” anymore, and the Gentiles are described as surprised when they do not join them in the same or similar activities anymore (1 Pet 4:3–4). Several aspects of 1 Peter might imply that the recipients were Jews (see especially 1:1);⁷⁷ the descriptions of 4:3–4, however, probably exclude a Jewish background. The recipients are here presumed to have been idolaters, that is, polytheists; this understanding excludes Jews but not former proselytes or other Gentiles.

Accordingly, being former polytheists, the proselytes described in Philo enable us to better understand the social implications of the conversion of the recipients presumed in 1 Peter. Furthermore, drawing on the insights from modern social science studies on the embedded nature of religion in their kind of society,⁷⁸ we realize even more that the issue at stake was not peripheral to their social world, but comprised most aspects of their daily life. It is obvious that Philo also was fully aware of the social consequences of proselytism with regard to family and bonds of friendship. Hence, we now turn to these issues.

Leaving One's Country, Family and Kinsfolk

Because Philo is often dealing directly with Pentateuchal texts when he elaborates on the social aspects of the life of the proselytes, he sometimes quotes from the biblical descriptions of Moses' telling the Israelites to take care of their strangers. The proselytes, according to Philo, are said to have left “their country, their kinsfolk and their friends for the sake of virtue and religion” (ἀπολελοιπότες φησί πατρίδα καὶ φίλους καὶ συγγενεῖς δι' ἀρετὴν καὶ ὁσιότητα; Spec. 1:52; cf. Virt. 102). This is for Philo a saying not only about the past but also about his own time. Hence, one might say that, “According

⁷⁷ Cf. the discussion in Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 50–51; Michaels, *1 Peter*, xlix–lv.

⁷⁸ Bruce J. Malina, “Religion in the World of Paul,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 16 (1986): 92–101.

to Philo, conversion meant that the proselytes made a sociological, judicial and ethnic break with pagan society and joined another ethnic group, the Jewish nation.”⁷⁹ This process, furthermore, was not an easy one; it often led to enmity and dangers from their former fellows. It seems as though Philo almost considered it natural and inevitable that proselytes, when leaving their ancestral religion in preference to Judaism, were doing so at the risk of their lives. Not only is Tamar said to have “deserted to the camp of piety at the risk of her life” (Virt. 220), but proselytes in general are so described. In Spec. 4,178 he says that God cares for the incomer because

... he has turned his kinsfolk, who in the ordinary course of things would be his sole confederates, into mortal enemies, by coming as a pilgrim to truth and the honouring of One who alone is worthy of honour, and by leaving the mythical fables and multiplicity of sovereigns, so highly honoured by the parents and grand-parents and ancestors and blood-relations of this immigrant to a better home.

This passage is perhaps one of the most instructive with regard to the way Philo took into consideration the *dangers* that the proselytes were exposed to. In leaving the context of their family traditions, they could be exposed to mortal dangers. This aspect is also expressed by characterizing the proselytes as refugees: they are not to be denied citizenship but “to find shelter standing ready for refugees to the camp of piety” (Spec. 1,52). These issues are not only found in Philo but also in the ancient novel about *Joseph and Aseneth*. Aseneth contemplates the enmity her conversion has triggered: “All people have come to hate me, and on top of those my father and mother, because I too, have come to hate their gods and have destroyed them. . . . And therefore my father and mother and my whole family have come to hate me and said, ‘Aseneth is not our daughter because she destroyed our gods’” (Joseph and Aseneth 11:4–6, cf. 12:7). Tacitus in *Histories* 5:5 has obviously caught the tone of Philo when he says about the Jews that “those who come

⁷⁹ Borgen, “The Early Church and the Hellenistic Synagogue,” 213.

over to their religion adopt the practice, and have this lesson first instilled into them, to despise the gods, to disown their country, and set at nought parents, children and brethren.”⁸⁰

Several Christian sources contain reflections of similar descriptions in their characterizations of the Christian converts. One might point to Eph 2:11–22, especially Eph 2:12: “at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” As Christians they have become citizen of a new ‘politeia’ (Phil 3:20). As Borgen points out, however, there is a difference: “the Christian proselytes are not to make an ethnic and judicial break away from their families, country and nation.”⁸¹ What is the situation in 1 Peter?

1 Peter contains several remarks about the endangered situation of the recipients as Christians, and there are exhortations not to indulge in the excesses of the life of their neighbors. The terms *πάσχειν* (12x) and *πάθημα* (4x) are used more times in this letter than in any other NT book. The Christians are suffering temptations or testings (1:6: *ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς*), and they are spoken against (2:12; *καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν*; cf. 3:16); they are reviled (3:9; *λοιδορία*), abused (4:4: *βλασφεμέω*) and reproached (4:14: *ὀνειδίζω*). Theologically evaluated, these sufferings are characterized as testings and refining of faith (1:7f). As social phenomena, the sufferings seem to have been part of an ostracism of Christians. It is, admittedly, not stated by whom these sufferings were inflicted whether by family members, neighbors or authorities. Perhaps the author did not know the details only that the recipients were suffering severe social problems because of their faith. Some of these sufferings, if

⁸⁰ Consider also the sternness of Philo in his descriptions of *Jewish* apostates, and the measures to be taken against them; see Torrey Seland, *Establishment Violence in Philo & Luke: A Study of Non-Conformity to the Torah & Jewish Vigilante Reactions*, in *Establishment Violence*, Biblical Interpretation Series 15 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995);

⁸¹ Cf. Borgen, “The Early Church and the Hellenistic Synagogue,” 214, Borgen emphasizes the cross-national nature of the church.

not all, have often been read as references to more or less official persecutions.⁸² But because they are hard to fit into what we know about the Roman persecutions of the Christians at the end of the first century CE, most scholars now consider them more likely to have been local harassment and ostracism than persecutions.⁸³

It is, furthermore, a central part of these sufferings that they occur because of the nature of the converts: they are being reproached because of the name of Christ (4:14), they suffer because they are Christians (4:15). No particular “crimes” of the Christians are singled out as reasons for their neighbors’ aggression. 1 Pet 2:12 says they are slandered as “evildoers”; 4:16 might, however, point to efforts to accuse Christians of murder, theft, or as being *ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος*; “people who defrauds others” or “meddles in their business.”⁸⁴ It is evident that their problems are due to the fact that the others consider them outsiders. They are different, and they are being discriminated against because of their exclusiveness and unwillingness to conform an attitude they did not have before: “They are surprised that you do not now join them in the same wild profligacy, and they abuse you” (4:4). Hence, their estrangement is obviously associated with their status as Christians (4:16) and their separateness from the others.

In a society so saturated with the values of honor and shame, these slanders, reviling and abuses were great obstacles to social integration in their local communities; the Christians became *παρεπιδήμιος διασποράς* “(1:1), and *παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους*” (2:12). For the time being, they were living in a state of “*παροικία*” (1:17). The author of 1 Peter exhorts them to be steadfast in their trials so that their faith may turn out worthy of their honor “at the revelation

⁸² See the reviews in Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 28–36; Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 52–56; J. Molthagen, “Die Lage der Christen im römischen Reich nach dem 1. Petrusbrief. Zum Problem einer Domitianischen Verfolgung,” *Historia* 44 (1995): 422–58.

⁸³ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 34–35; Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*, 105–32.

⁸⁴ On this rare and difficult word, see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 310–12; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 267–68; Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 141.

of Jesus Christ" (1:7). Furthermore, they are to be prepared to make a defense to those who call them to account for their faith; in this way they should live honorably among the Gentiles, and keep their conscience clear. Those who revile and abuse them will at the end be put to shame (4:15–16). Hence, while suffering shaming for the present time, they must remember that their source of honor is God, which will become evident at the parousia (1:17). Thus, the emphasis on the conduct of the Christians (their ἀναστροφή) is strongly associated with their strained situation and life as strangers (cf. 2:12.15) in the present world.⁸⁵

Several scholars have seen the author's use of the "Haustafel" schemes in this letter as due to the social problems dealt with. Malherbe has suggested that "Both Philo and Josephus use expansions of the Haustafel form to counter the charges that Judaism was antisocial and to present it as the ideal society",⁸⁶ and he is of the opinion that such an apologetic use of the Haustafel can also be detected in 1 Peter. His former student, D.L. Balch has elaborated on his view⁸⁷ but goes so far as to argue that Household codes in 1 Peter were used to argue and demonstrate the Christians' conformity to the accepted rules of the Graeco-Roman societies. Balch categorizes this strategy as assimilation: its purpose was to integrate, to accomodate and assimilate. This reasoning, however, carries the arguments too far. Elliott has quite correctly criticized Balch for

⁸⁵ W.C. van Unnik, "The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter," in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W.C. Van Unnik. Part Two*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980), 83–105; Unnik, W.C. van, "Christianity According to 1 Peter."

⁸⁶ See Abraham J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 52; Malherbe, "Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament," 304–13. This view has been adopted by A.F. Segal, "The Costs of Proselytism and Conversion," in *Seminar Papers SBL Annual Meeting 1988* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988), 336–69.

⁸⁷ D.L. Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*, SBL Monograph Series (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981); David L. Balch, "Household Codes," in *Graeco-Roman Literature and the New Testament*, edited by David E. Aune (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988), 25–50.

not taking into account “the letter’s repeated call for Christian separation from the world.”⁸⁸ The goal of 1 Peter is not assimilation to Graeco-Roman society; its exhortations demonstrate, rather, that the goal was to encourage the recipients to live as Christians and to be further assimilated into the Christian way of life and beliefs.⁸⁹

Finally, drawing on Philo in considering the various aspects of the vices listed in 4:3–4, it is illuminating to see the similarity of these issues with the ways that Philo describes the activities of the various Graeco-Roman clubs and associations.⁹⁰ He emphasizes eating and drinking (Spec. 2,193; Legat. 312), intrigues and rioting (Spec. 3,96; Vita Cont 40–41), and describes them as clubs with “a large membership, whose fellowship is founded on no sound strong principle but on strong liquor and drunkenness and sottish carousing and their offspring, wantonness” (Flacc. 136). These characterizations indicate the great problems that these clubs and associations represented for both Jews and Christians on the cultural and social level, and later sources demonstrate similar problems for the Christians too (see Tertullian).⁹¹ The Christians’ ‘otherliness’ and separateness are strongly emphasized in 1 Peter.

Entering a Community of Fictive Kinship and Brotherly Love

The first century Mediterranean world was a world in which the individualism so cherished and well-known to us in the Western industrialized world was little known and even less favored. People lived in close-knit societies, they were dependent upon, and depended on their group, whether family, clan, tribe or city. Their behavior

⁸⁸ Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 111.

⁸⁹ See further on this in the last chapter of present book.

⁹⁰ See further Torrey Seland, “Philo and the Clubs and Associations of Alexandria,” in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, eds John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson (London: Routledge, 1996), 110–27.

⁹¹ See also my brief review article; “Collegium kai Ekklesia: Nyere synspunkter på de gresk-romerske foreninger som modell for og parallell til de urkristne forsamlinger,” *Ung Teologi* (1984): 49–65.

and values were derived from the life and traditions of their group. Collectivism was highly honored;⁹² the personality type has been characterized as dyadic.⁹³ One always had to belong to a group. Accordingly, converting from one group to another was a process of cutting ties, followed by a strong need to make new bonds. Hence, the author of 1 Peter repeatedly admonished his readers to show brotherly love to their fellow believers; a new kinship and fellowship of care had to be established:

1:22: ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε ἐκτενῶς;

2:17: τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπᾶτε;

4:8: πρὸ πάντων τὴν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῇ ἔχοντες.

Brotherly love is present in the works of Philo as well. It has been suggested, however, that Philo never use the OT injunction of loving one's neighbor as oneself (Lev 19:18b),⁹⁴ but this is incorrect.⁹⁵ Philo clearly applies Lev 19:34 in Spec. 1,51–53 and Virt. 102–104. Both of these passages deal with love toward proselytes, and the Jews are especially admonished to include the proselytes in their brotherly love (Spec. 1,52, cf. Virt. 102): "Thus, while giving equal rank to all in-comers with all the privileges which he gives to the native-born, he exhorts the old nobility to honour them not only with marks of respect but with special friendship and with more than ordinary goodwill." This exhortation to love proselytes is also found in later rabbinic sayings.⁹⁶ Philo also states that, at conversion, the

⁹² Harry C. Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism* (Boulder: Wetsview Press, 1995).

⁹³ Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, "First Century Personality: Dyadic, not Individualistic," edited by Jerome H. Neyrey, in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models of Interpretation* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publ., 1991), 67–95; Bruce J. Malina, "Is There a Circum-Mediterranean Person? Looking for Stereotypes," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 22 (1992): 66–87.

⁹⁴ A. Nissen, *Gott und der Nächste im antiken Judentum*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 15 (Tübingen, 1974), 304–05.

⁹⁵ Borgen, "The Early Church and the Hellenistic Synagogue," 82f.95; Peder Borgen, "The Golden Rule, with Emphasis on Its Usage in the Gospels," in *Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men* (Trondheim: Tapir, 1983), 99–114.

⁹⁶ Cf. e.g., Mek. Ex. 22,20, cf. Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar I*, pp. 355–359.

proselytes at once become friendly and loving, while apostates become shameless, quarrelsome, and friends of falsehood and perjury (Virt. 182). Brotherly love is thus a mark of a true proselyte as well as a native-born Jew, while its absence is notable among the others—the outsiders, and the apostates. The focus on brotherly love in 1 Peter thus nicely corresponds to the same emphasis in Jewish literature. Van Unnik takes such exhortations as 1 Peter 1:22; 2:17; 4:8 as examples of traces of proselytism in the letter.⁹⁷ Again, it is hard to escape the conclusion that he overstates his case since it cannot be demonstrated from the sources that brotherly love was an admonition primarily given to (former) proselytes. If that were the case, one would have to say that all the readers of both Paul's and Johns' letters were (former) proselytes because these letters contain several exhortations to brotherly love (for example Rom 12:10; 13:8; Eph 1:15; 1 John 4:7.11). But no one has seriously come up with such a suggestion.

There is not much about “church-organization structures” in 1 Peter, but the love of these early Christians had a context of fictive kinship system that also included some organizational structures. 1 Peter does not use the term ἐκκλησία; the term closest to this is ‘brotherhood’: “Love the brotherhood” (τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπᾶτε, 2:17; cf. 5:9), and they are to “show hospitality one to another without begrudging” (4:9). They have God as their Father (1:17), they have been born again (1:3.23; 2:2), and they are a holy priesthood (2:5.9).⁹⁸ The author can even quote Hos 1:9 and say that in “times past you were not a people, but now you are God's people” (2:10). 1 Pet 5:1–6 also suggest that they had some organizational structures as their leaders are called “elders”, but this term is too

⁹⁷ Unnik, W.C. van, “The Redemption in 1 Peter I 18–19 and the Problem of the First Epistle of Peter,” 65–66.

⁹⁸ On the understanding of priesthood in Philo and 1 Peter, see Chapter Three below, originally printed as Torrey Seland, “The ‘Common Priesthood’ of Philo and 1 Peter: A Philonic Reading of 1 Peter 2.5,9,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 57 (1995): 87–119.

general to enable any further description of the structures concerned.

Enough is stated above, however, to demonstrate that the Jewish issues of love and goodwill towards the proselytes are paralleled in the descriptions of the converts in 1 Peter as well. Again, the descriptions of the proselytes in Philo help us to consider the exhortations of 1 Peter in context.

Summary and Conclusion

We set out to investigate the possible social background of the much-discussed terms *πάροικος* and *παρεπίδημος* in 1 Peter. Suggesting that they are to be read as metaphors, having the Jewish institution of proselytism as a main part of the book's social background that is, as a main part of its social source of domain we first looked at how the recipients of 1 Peter had been described in recent research. Investigating, then, the use of the Hebrew terms *גר* and *גר וחושב* in the Hebrew Scriptures, and their Greek equivalents in LXX and in the works of Philo, we found it plausible that the use of these terms in these works should be considered just not to denote strangers, but in some cases to be related to what we may call proselytes. Hence, they should be read as belonging to the conceptual and semantic field of 'proselytism'. Accordingly, the descriptions of proselytes in Philo and other Diaspora works as *Joseph and Aseneth* should be considered important in understanding the social aspects of the early Christians described in 1 Peter. Investigating the relevant expressions in 1 Peter in light of Philonic and other descriptions of proselytes, we found that the central aspects of leaving the polytheism for monotheism, leaving one's country, family, and kinfolk, becoming enemies of families and friends at the risk of their own lives, and entering a community of fictive kinship and brotherly love were all categories and aspects valuable for illuminating the conditions of the recipients of 1 Peter as perceived by the author. Hence my conclusion is that considering proselytism as a major

part of the source domain for understanding the role of the metaphors of *πάροικος* and *παρεπίδημος* in 1 Peter enhances our understanding of the way the author of this letter perceived the social conditions of its recipients.

CHAPTER THREE

THE 'COMMON PRIESTHOOD' OF PHILO AND 1 PETER: A PHILONIC READING OF 1 PETER 2:5 & 9

Introduction

This article is in a way an exercise in interpretation and hermeneutics. Accepting that we all have our presuppositions, it will deal with the following question: How would a person well versed in the works of Philo understand the issue of “common priesthood” in 1 Peter 2:5+9?

Several recent biblical studies have focused on the aspect of the reader of a text. Works influenced by reader-response procedures have applied the notion of an implied reader, set up against real readers of various shades (expert reader and so on). Other works have, in order to better understand the reading processes involved, tried to equip this rather bloodless implied reader with social values, social scripts, by looking for a plausible social location. What I do in the following two chapters in the present study is to work with another kind of hypothetical reader; a *Philonic reader* “well versed in Philo’s works,” that is, a reader located in the symbolic universe represented by the works of Philo. Of course, this reader is my own construction of an expert or ideal reader of the works of Philo, hence my Philonic reader too is a “hypothetical reader.” I imagine a Jewish reader who is well versed in Philo’s works, and that he or she would know the symbolic universe laid out in Philo’s works just as well as Philo, if not better.

To arrive at a plausible solution to this question, I apply the following procedure: First I investigate the works of Philo, studying how he conceived of the priesthoods of Israel. Then I look at recent interpretations of 1 Peter 2:5+9, providing both a presentation of

the most crucial issues at stake, and confronting these with my findings from Philo by asking how a Philonic reader, that is, a person well versed in the works of Philo, might understand 1 Peter 2:5+9.

By focusing on how such a reader would possibly interpret 1 Peter 2:5+9 we might be better able to see what they have in common, and where they differ. Hence in this way both our understanding of Philo's works as well as our understanding of 1 Peter might benefit.

In 1976 J.H. Elliott characterized 1 Peter as "an exegetical stepchild" in New Testament research.¹ In the years following that article both his own studies² and several others³ have brought 1 Peter out of its backwater. Several issues of interpretation, however, remain controversial.⁴ The present article focuses on one of these; namely the understanding of the so called "common priesthood" in 1 Peter 2:5+9.

Several scholars have looked for a plausible background for the view of the "common priesthood" found in 1 Peter 2:5+9. Some have looked to Qumran. According to E. Best, "Qumran is the cradle from which the NT conception of the temple and the priesthood

¹ Elliott, "The Rehabilitation of an Exegetical Stepchild: 1 Peter in Recent Research."

² Cf. his older study Elliott, *The Elect*, and also Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*; Elliott, "1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy: A Discussion with David Balch."

³ Sylva, D., "1 Peter Studies: The State of the Discipline"; Sylva, Dennis, "The Critical Exploration of 1 Peter."

⁴ In the present study the following commentaries have been consulted: Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*; Charles Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and of St. Jude*, reprint, 1972, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh); Brun, *Förste Peters Brev*; Karl Hermann Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe. Der Judasbriefe*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament XIII,2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1988); Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter. The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*; Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*; Goppelt, Leonhard, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*; Olsson, *Första Petrusbrevet*; Hiebert, *First Peter: An Exegetical Commentary*; Wayne A. Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, reprint, 1988, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Leicester); Michaels, *1 Peter*; Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*; Elliott, *1 Peter*; Earl J. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, Reading the New Testament (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 2000).

of the church is derived.”⁵ Ramsey Michaels is more reluctant as he concludes that “Despite certain similarities between the perspectives of 1 Peter and the Qumran community, there is no real evidence of direct influence.”⁶ There are, admittedly, several aspects of the self descriptions given in the Qumran literature comparable to 1 Peter 2:5+9 (e.g., CD 3.19–49; 7.19; 20.10.13; 1 QS 5.6; 8.4–10). In the present context I am not, however, looking so much for the direct influential background of the “common priesthood” of 1 Peter as for a plausible comparable social and ideological setting. And as 1 Peter is most probably written from a Diaspora setting (1 Peter 1:1f; 5:13: from Babylon; from Rome?) to Christian communities in the Diaspora, a comparison with the works of Philo might be profitable.

The suggestion that Philo’s works may be of relevance for understanding 1 Peter is not new. J. Blinzler surmises that the Apostle may have taken some of his interpretations of Exod 19:6 from Hellenistic Jewish interpretations,⁷ and J.H. Elliott says with regard to the βασιλειον of 1 Peter 2:5 that Peter “found an interpretation of Philo in particular . . . useful for his discourse in 2:4–10.”⁸ It is the thesis of this study, however, that even though most studies dealing with 1 Peter 2:5+9 include Philo’s references to Ex 19:6,⁹ the fundamental Old Testament text involved, they fail to consider his view of Israel at large as a priesthood. In this way important parts of Philo’s symbolic universe are excluded. Hence, when asking how a Philonic reader might read 1 Peter 2:5+9, we have to take account of these broader aspects. In this way important material for a contextual reading of 1 Peter 2:5+9 may be provided.

⁵ Ernest Best, “1 Peter II 4–10: A Reconsideration,” *Novum Testamentum* 11 (1969): 284; B Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament: A Comparative Study in the Temple Symbolism of the Qumran Texts and the New Testament* (Cambridge, 1965).

⁶ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 96.

⁷ Joseph Blinzler, “IERATEYMA: Zur Exegese von 1 Peter 2,5 u 9,” in *EPISKOPUS: Festschrift Für Kardinal Michael von Faulhaber* (Regensburg, 1949), 59.

⁸ Elliott, *The Elect*, 152.

⁹ Cf. *Sobr.* 66; *Abr.* 56.

The Priesthoods of Israel According to Philo

When studying the works of Philo and the various views of the Temple, the High Priest, and the priests set forth therein, one should keep in mind that Philo is no blunt allegorizer of the Jewish constitution and its cultic institutions. There are, for sure, several passages that represent profound allegories of various institutions, but at the same time Philo does not sever himself or his readers from the obligation to observe the Torah injunctions associated with, for example, the Temple.

According to a now famous passage of Migr. 89–93, Philo had to criticize some people whose allegories led them to abolish the observances. On the one hand he seems to agree with many of their allegories, but on the other hand he emphasizes that this should not be coupled with abolishing the cultic institutions and the regulations of the Torah; they ought to give careful attention to both aspects:

It is true that the feast is a symbol of the gladness of soul and of thankfulness to God, but we should not for this reason turn our backs on the general gatherings of the year's seasons . . . Why, we shall be ignoring the sanctity of the Temple and a thousand other things, if we are going to pay heed to nothing except what is shewn us by the inner meaning of things (Migr. 92).¹⁰

There is nothing in Philo of the attitude typical of the Christians, namely a disregard of the need for the material sacrifices of the Jerusalem Temple.¹¹

¹⁰ Cf on this passage also D.M. Hay, "Philo's References to Other Allegorists," *Studia Philonica* 6 (1979–80). Hence, one might say with Wenschkewitz, that "Die Notwendigkeit des Tempels und seines Kultus ist für Philo schlechthin Axiom, es ist etwas, was für ihn dennoch glaubensmässig nötig und daher in seiner Notwendigkeit nicht weiter zu erweisen ist." See Hans Wenschkewitz, *Die Spiritualisierung der Kultusbegriffe: Tempel, Priester und Opfer Im Neuen Testament*, Angelos. Archiv Für Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte und Kulturkunde (Leipzig: Verlag von Eduard Pfeiffer, 1932), 70; cf. also V. Nikiprowetzky, "La Spiritualization des Sacrifices et le Culte Sacrificiel au Temple de Jérusalem chez Philon d'Alexandrie," *Semitica* 17 (1967): 97–116.

¹¹ Cf. Peter V. Legarh, *Guds Tempel: Tempelsymbolisme og Kristologi hos Ignatius af*

The rather conservative view and attitude of Philo towards these cultic institutions should also make one cautious about characterizing the view expressed in his allegories as "spiritualization". In so far as this term means that the material cult is not to be observed but to be regarded as something more primitive and/or even something to be rejected, it is not applicable as a characterization of Philo's allegories. Perhaps one should apply a somewhat more refined terminology, and reserve the category "spiritualization" for the kind of views expressed by, for instance, the Stoics,¹² and consider the "Kultisierung"-concept introduced by E. Schüssler Fiorenza,¹³ and also the category "psychologizing" as used by D.M. Hay.¹⁴ That Philo might spiritualize should not be excluded a priori, but it should not stand as the only alternative to the literal description. Hence both the categories "Kultisierung" and "psychologizing" might be profitable descriptions. Furthermore, one should also observe the difference between the works of the *Expositio* and the exegetical commentaries,¹⁵ and work from the more literal descriptions to the allegorical or symbolical to use Philo's own term. Hence I will review below his

Antiokia, Menighedsfakultetets Videnskabelige Serie (Århus, 1992). Legarth, alas, emphasizes too much Philo (pp. 38–43) as spiritualizing.

¹² Wenschkewitz, *Die Spiritualisierung*, 49–66.

¹³ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Priester für Gott: Studien zum Herrschafts- und Priestermotiv in der Apokalypse*, Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen (Münster: Verlag Aschendorff, 1972), 50: "Kultisierung" is here to be understood as "eine Kultisierung einer im ursprünglichen Sinne nicht kultischen Realität." Cf. also her article Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Cultic Language in Qumran and in the NT," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 38 (1976): 159–77, esp pp. 161f where she calls it a "transference"; the cultic concepts were "shifted to designate a reality which was not cultic."

¹⁴ Cf. Hay, "Philo's References to Other Allegorists." Hay understands "psychological" here as that dealing with "the human nature and the individual's relation to God."

¹⁵ On the various works of Philo, see Peder Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria A Critical and Synthetical Survey of Research Since World War II," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt II* 21,1: *Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung*. 2, *Principat. Religion: (Hellenistisches Judentum in römischer Zeit: Philon und Josephus)*, edited by Wolfgang Haase (Berlin, 1984), 98–154; Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria, An Exegete for His Time*.

literal and symbolic descriptions of the social cultic institutions of Israel as the Temple, the High Priest, the priests, trying to distinguish between the various ways Philo perceived these institutions.¹⁶

Philo's Views on the Temple

According to Spec. 1,66–67, “the highest, and in the truest sense the holy, temple of God is, as we must believe, the whole universe, having for its sanctuary the most sacred part of all existence, even heaven, for its votive ornaments the stars, for its priests the angels who are servitors to his powers . . .” (cf. Plant. 126). Philo may here be influenced by similar statements from the Stoics.¹⁷

But then there also is the Temple made by hands, a description which hardly is to be taken as derogatory as it concerns the Jerusalem temple. As God is one, so it is just right that there should be only one temple (Spec. 1,67, cf. Josephus’ *Contra Apion* 2,193; *Ant.* 4,200). To this temple there come countless of pilgrims at every feast, and according to Prov. 64 Philo himself had visited the Jerusalem temple at least once “to offer up prayers and sacrifices.” In several passages he speaks of its splendour: “Of all the temples anywhere it is the most beautiful, ever from endless ages embellished by ceaseless and unsparing expenditure” (*Legat.* 198), in fact its beauty is “beyond description” (παντὸς λόγου κρείττων: Spec. 1,72). In Spec. 1,71–73 he gives detailed descriptions of its size and various structures.

But in addition to these two instances, Philo seems also to write about other entities as temple; humanity, or rather the human soul: “Apart from the κόσμος, the λογικὴ ψυχὴ, the νοῦς, the λογισμός,

¹⁶ We will not, however, pay very much attention to the possible background of the traditions and expositions of Philo. On these issues, F. Geiger, *Philon von Alexandria als Sozialer Denker* (Stuttgart, 1932); E.R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (New Haven, 1935); I. Heinemann, *Philons Griechische und Jüdische Bildung: Kulturvergleichende Untersuchungen zu Philons Darstellung der Jüdischen Gesetze* (Darmstadt, 1966).

¹⁷ Cf. TDNT III, p. 238 (Schrenk). Cf. here also R.J. McKelvey, *The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament*, Oxford Theological Monographs 3 (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 38f which points to similarities with Plato’s thought.

the διάνοια of the wise are called the θεοῦ οἶκος, the ἱερὸν ἅγιον”¹⁸ (Somn. 1,149; 2,248; Virt. 188; cf. esp. Praem. 123 where Philo says that “for in truth the wise man’s mind is a βασιλείον and οἶκος of God”). Philo is, however, reluctant to speak of man and his body as a temple. About Adam, the first man, it is said in Opif. 137 that as “a sacred dwelling-place or shrine (he) was being fashioned for the reasonable soul” (οἶκος γάρ τις ἢ νεὼς ἱερὸς ἐτεκταίνετο ψυχῆς λογικῆς). But the same expression is not used of human beings in general, probably because according to the view of Philo Adam was the most perfect man, all others being copies that become farther and farther removed in quality from the original (Opif. 137ff). The various psychological Philonic interpretations of man as temple are hard to fit into a consistent picture; one might perhaps renounce trying, and agree with Wenschkewitz that Philo is not consistent here in his thought.¹⁹ But it remains that for Philo, not only is there a Jerusalem temple, but the whole universe, the macrocosmos, may be characterized as a temple. And in some contexts the human beings as a microcosmos, is a temple for the indwelling logos.

Philo’s Views on the High Priest

Extensive descriptions of the High Priest, his vestments and duties, are given in Spec. 1,84–97 and Mos. 2,109–115.²⁰ Philo deals with the legal requirements for the High Priest, such as marriage and purity rules (Spec. 1,101ff, 228f), his particular liturgical functions,

¹⁸ TDNT III, p. 241 (Schrenk); Wenschkewitz, *Die Spiritualisierung*, 82ff; McKelvey, *The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament*, 53ff.

¹⁹ Cf. Wenschkewitz, *Die Spiritualisierung*, 84: “Wie wenig Philo den Gedanken der Seele als Tempel Gottes durchgedacht hat, beweist die Tatsache, dass er den νοῦς sowohl als Tempel, als auch als ἀπόσπασμα θεῖον, d.h. also als Repräsentant Gottes in der als Tempel gedachten Seele bezeichnen kann.”

²⁰ On these texts and others dealing with the High Priest, see also Wenschkewitz, *Die Spiritualisierung*, 71ff; and especially J. Laporte, “The High Priest in Philo of Alexandria,” *The Studia Philonica Annual* 3 (1991): 71–82; *Heirs of the Septuagint: Philo, Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity. Festschrift for Earle Hilgert*, vol. 3, edited by David T. Runia, David M. Hay, and David Winston (Atlanta, Georgia).

his role as an interpreter of the Law and his great role as a carrier of virtue and holiness.²¹ His primary role for the people, however, is to be a mediator between them and God.

But the High Priest is not only a mediator for Israel, but in fact for the whole world. His vestments, especially his beautiful robe, are described at length, and as the High Priest enters the Holy of Holies, he represents not only Israel, but the whole world. The design of the robe with its various elements is a likeness and a copy of the universe (Spec. 1,84–85). Hence when he enters to sacrifice, he prays and sacrifices on behalf of the whole world, animate and inanimate (Spec. 1,97):

Among the other nations the priests are accustomed to offer prayers and sacrifices for their kinsmen and friends and fellow-countrymen only, but the High Priest of the Jews makes prayers and gives thanks not only on behalf of the whole human race but also for the parts of nature, earth, water, air, fire. For he holds the world to be, as it in very truth is, his country, and in its behalf he is wont to propitiate the Ruler with supplication and intercession, beseeching Him to make His creature a partaker of His own kindly and merciful nature.²²

This description is undoubtedly partly influenced by Stoic conceptions of the wise man as a world citizen. But Philo expresses here his view that in his mediatorial and intercessory function the High Priest embodies aspects of the unique role of Israel in the world. As we shall see below, these aspects are also represented by the way Philo describes the Israelites at large as priests, participating in a “common priesthood” or “priesthood of the faithful”.²³

But there is even more in Philo’s view of the High Priest. There

²¹ Cf. further Laporte, J., “The High Priest in Philo of Alexandria,” 71ff.

²² Cf. the parallel text of Mos. 2,133f: “Thus the high priest arrayed when he sets forth to his holy duties, in order that when he enters to offer the ancestral prayers and sacrifices there may enter with him the whole universe, as signified in the types of it which he brings upon his person, the long robe a copy of the air. . . .”

²³ Laporte’s expression in his article “The High Priest in Philo of Alexandria,” 73f.

is also a cosmic High Priest, *the Logos*. Philo can discuss the nature of the empirical High Priest. According to Spec. 1,116 and Somn. 2,185, standing before God as a mediator, he is more than a man, a being somewhat between man and God, "a being whose nature is midway between [man and] God, less than God, more than man" (Somn. 2,188). Searching the more allegorical works of Philo, we find the Logos as High Priest more fully expounded (cf. Somn. 1,215–16; Heres 205–206; Fuga. 106–107). In a way the universe is the temple of God (Spec. 1,66), then there is the temple made by hands (Spec. 1,67, cf. below), but according to Somn. 1,215 there is also another, the rational soul (λογικὴ ψυχὴ). In the first one, the universe, the Logos is the High Priest. The clothing he puts on is the world (Fuga. 110, cf. Migr. 102), on the other hand, Logos can also be described as the high priest of the soul, that is, in the soul (QG 2,62; QE 2,13). There is a "macrocosmos", in which the Logos is the High Priest, but there is also the "microcosmos"; man, that is humanity.

The expressions of Philo are not always easy to decipher as he sometimes mingles his descriptions, passing from the literal High Priest to the Logos, and then back again. According to Wenschkewitz Philo's literal description of the High Priest is influenced by his cosmological Logos speculations.²⁴ According to Goodenough,²⁵ Philo's descriptions of the High Priest are part of his description of Judaism as a mystery, a part called the mystery of Aaron. Evaluated in light of our categories presented above, Philo does not leave out the literal High Priest of Jerusalem: he is the High Priest who intercedes on behalf of humanity. But there are the symbolic expositions as well, in which the literal High Priest gives images and functions to the symbolic one, the Logos, and vice versa. And there is also the psychological part, or the "interiorization" as Laporte terms it:

²⁴ Wenschkewitz, *Die Spiritualisierung*, 73.

²⁵ Goodenough, *By Light, Light The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism*, 95–120.

Actually, in many references to the high priest, Philo means the internal high priest, which is the mind enlightened by the divine logos, or even the divine logos, the first born of God, a kind of 'second God,' guide, and mediator of praise.²⁶

Philo's Views on the Priesthood of Israel

The various views of Philo on the Temple and the High Priest are to a great extent parallel to his elaborations on the priesthood. The priesthood concerned with the cultic services in the Temple is dealt with in Spec. 1,79–116. Here various rules concerning their purity and functions are spelled out, and there is no doubt as to their central role in the cult. Indeed, the rules contained in the Law make Philo state that "it is clear that the law invests the priests with the dignity and honours of royalty" (ὅτι βασιλέων σεμνότητα καὶ τιμὴν περιάπτει τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν ὁ νόμος). That the many injunctions of the Law on tithes to be paid to the priests might be a burden to many is also reflected in Spec. 1,153. Here Philo accuses those who neglect these obligations; they bring about the impoverishment of both the priests and themselves.

But then there is a broadening of the concept of priesthood in Philo. In a way the whole people can be described as priests: they are partakers of a kind of "common priesthood". Philo has several statements about this: first, the general priesthood of the people seems to be associated with their obedience to the Law; secondly, it seems to make them a vicarious institution for the whole world; and thirdly, it is especially displayed in the rituals of the Passover.

In Abr. 98 he says that from Abraham there should come not only sons and daughters, but "... a whole nation, and that the nation dearest of all to God, which as I hold, has received the gift of priesthood and prophecy on behalf of all mankind."²⁷ Here their

²⁶ Laporte, J., "The High Priest in Philo of Alexandria," 76.

²⁷ Cf. the parallel saying of Mos. 1,149: Israel is "... a nation destined to be consecrated above all others to offer prayers for ever on behalf of the human race that it may be delivered from evil and participate in what is good."

special position in the world is ascribed them because they have been given the very special gift of priesthood on behalf of all, that is, the priesthood related to the temple institution. But in other passages there are other sayings that seem to focus not only on the prerogatives of having this particular priesthood, but on the priestly character of the people as such. Some of these are more general statements that seem to associate the priesthood with obedience to the Law. In Spec. 2,164 it is said that "the legislation in a sense is a lesson on the sacred office," and that "a life led in conformity with the laws necessarily confers priesthood or rather high priesthood." Hence, those who follow the Law and purify themselves, their resolution "has given them a place in the sacerdotal caste and advanced them to equal honour with the priest" (Spec. 1,243). But though there are clear individualistic traits here, these should not be exaggerated. The priesthood concerned is clearly linked to the Law and hence to Israel.²⁸ There is no "spiritualisierung" of the priesthood here. So if Philo can say that "The chief and most essential quality required by a priest is piety" (εὐσέβεια; Mos. 1,66), the εὐσέβεια required is that given by and through the Law (cf. Spec. 2,162f; Sacr. 37).

But then we might go somewhat further. Before we spell out more fully, however, how the "common priesthood" of Israel is especially displayed in the Passover rites, one might ask how this "common priesthood" is related to that associated with the temple. Philo deals with this issue in Quaest. in Exod 2,10 in an exposition of Exod 12:6b: "*And all the multitude shall sacrifice.*" Here he sets forth several arguments for the people acting as priests on the Passover. Among those most relevant here is the historical one that the Levites had not yet been elected and the priesthood and the Temple had not

²⁸ This fact is overlooked by Wenschkewitz as he reads this passage so as to make him infer that "wo es auf die menschliche Leistung und nicht auf die Erwählung Gottes zur Erlangung der priesterlichen Würde ankommt, kann am Privileg einer Gemeinschaft (eines Standes, Volkes) prinzipiell nicht mehr festgehalten werden." Wenschkewitz, *Die Spiritualisierung*, 75.

yet been set up. But then the following principle is given: "He should grant priesthood to the whole nation in order that the part might be adorned through the whole, and not the whole through a part". In this way the nation should be "an archetypal example to the temple-wardens and priests and those who exercise the high-priesthood in carrying out the sacred rites." Hence, according to this exposition, the "common priesthood" of the people is not only the first, it is also the primary and the model for the particular priests involved in the temple services.

There is also another historical, or rather historical-theological argument to be found in Philo in Spec. 2,164–67. All the peoples of the world ought to honour the One God; but instead they introduce new gods, and only the Jews cling to the One and only God.²⁹ But by doing this, they become his special people, his special portion, and perform a substitutionary role in the world: in fact Philo states in Spec. 2,166 that

it is the literal truth that the error which the rest committed was corrected by the Jewish nation which passed over all created objects because they were created and naturally liable to destruction and chose the service of the Uncreated and Eternal . . .

It is this intermediary function that, according to Philo, is carried out through the priesthood of the people.

The particular "common priesthood" or "priesthood of the faithful" (cf. Laporte) then, is displayed in the Passover rites. Philo deals with this aspect in Mos. 2,224 and Spec. 2,145–49. In this feast, he says,

the victims are not brought to the altar by the laity and sacrificed by the priests, but, as commanded by the law, the whole nation acts as priest, each individual bringing what he offers on his own behalf and dealing with it with his own hands (Mos. 2,224; cf. Spec. 2,145).

²⁹ Here Philo might draw on the traditions that the Law was offered to all the peoples of the world at Sinai, but only Israel accepted to take the yoke of the Law upon themselves. Cf. on this G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era Vol 1* (New York: Schocken, 1971), 277ff.

During the Passover feast "every dwelling-house is invested with the outward semblance and dignity of a temple" (Spec. 2,148; QE 2,12). But the intercessory role of the people is not only displayed by their sacrifices, but also by their prayers (cf. Legat. 3; Mos. 1,149; 2,189; QG 3,44).³⁰

So in order to summarize the view of Philo here, it would suffice to quote from Spec. 2,162f:

... the Jewish nation is to the whole inhabited world what the priest is to the State. For the holy office in very truth belongs to the nation because it carries out all the rites of purification and both in body and soul obeys the injunctions of the divine law. ...".

"The common priesthood" of the Jews is derived both from the holy rites carried out in the temple for the whole world, by their own Passover in their homes, and by their observance of the Law. There is no real spiritualization in this view. The priesthood is not abolished nor deprived of its value; it coexists with the "common priesthood". Nor is there much psychologizing in Philo's views here. The Jewish nation is a priesthood to the world at large because of its sacred institution of Jerusalem, and by its special allegiance to the Law, the Torah, as displayed by their obedience and the Passover rites (prayers and sacrifices) that are carried out on behalf of all.

Summary

It is time to summarize the views of Philo on the Temple, High Priest, and priesthood, that is, our reconstruction of these issues in the symbolic universe of our philonic reader as represented by Philo's works. In all of Philo's presentations of these three aspects, we find that he retains the literal and material meaning of the institutions concerned. The regulations of the Law are to be carried out, and

³⁰ Torrey Seland, "Forbønn hos Filo av Aleksandria," in *Teologi på tidens torg: Festskrift til Peter Wilhelm Böckman*, edited by P. Borgen and et al. (Trondheim: Tapir, 1987), 155–78.

not to be neglected or abolished. But Philo goes further: there is both a macrocosmos, the world at large, and a microcosmos, the soul of humans. There is not only the Temple of Jerusalem and its priests and sacrifices. The world at large is like a temple, and the Logos may play a role as High Priest both in the world and in the soul of humanity.

And there is the priesthood of Jerusalem. But there is also a kind of “common priesthood.” The Jewish people are to be perceived as a priesthood in relation to the world: what the priest is to the state the Jews are to the world, and their sacrifices and prayers are on behalf of all. This “common priesthood” of Philo is not concerned with humanity, that is, it is not man-ward, but God-ward. It is not dealing with “mission”, but with praise and intercessions before God. Likewise, the sacrifices are to be carried out in accordance to the Law. But Philo is also especially keen on emphasizing their function of praise to God for his being. And the sacrifices have great ethical value: they are to be carried out with the right intention, and ethical lessons can be derived from them.

The ‘Common Priesthood’ of 1 Peter 2:5+9

The relevant text of 1 Peter 2:5+9 runs thus:

2:5: καὶ αὐτοὶ ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπροσδέκτους [τῷ] θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

2:9:7 Ὑμεῖς δὲ γένος ἐκλεκτόν, βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς·

In the following I shall give a brief presentation of the various positions taken by modern critical readers regarding the most crucial exegetical issues in 1 Peter 2:5+9, and then deal with these in light of the Philonic material. These issues may be given thus: how is the οἰκοδομεῖσθε of 2:5 to be understood; is the term οἶκος to be

taken as denoting "house", "household", or "temple"; does the term *ἱεράτευμα* denote priesthood as corporate group (*Körperschaft*), or a function, is it corporate or individual; furthermore, is the expression *βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα* of 2:9 to be read as two nouns or as an adjective and a noun? Lastly, the role of those constituting a *βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα* is stated by the verb *ἐξαγγείλητε*; is that to be understood as praise or proclamation, that is, is it God-wards or human-wards? I will review the various issues, and discuss them in relation to the Philonic material.

One should not, however, focus too narrowly on these issues alone: in asking how a Philonic reader would understand 1 Peter 2:5+9 one must be open to the possibilities that the Philonic background would illuminate other aspects as well as leaving some of the above-mentioned issues out of view.

When conjecturing about the community depicted in the 1 Peter and its symbolic universe, Philonic readers would most probably recognize several Jewish features in the letter and in the descriptions of its readers. Several aspects of these depictions are taken over from Jewish literature, from descriptions of the prerogatives of Israel. But they would probably hesitate already at 1:2–3 and onwards at the references to this Jesus *Messiah* and the descriptions of him so thoroughly fashioned in sacrificial terms (cf. 1:2.11.19; 2:21; 3:18; further 4:1.13; 5:1). As Philonic readers, they would not know much about the messiah,³¹ and the "messiah" they knew about was the Man to come according to Num. 24:7 LXX, cf. Praem. 95–97.³² But entering the stage of 2:5, how would they understand the issues at stake here?

³¹ *χρίω* and *χριστός* are not present in the works of Philo.

³² Cf. the discussions of the Philonic Messiah in R.D. Hect, "Philo and Messiah," in *Judaism and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*, eds J. Neusner, W.S. Green, and E. Frerichs (Cambridge, 1987), 139–68; Peder Borgen, "'There Shall Come Forth a Man' Reflections on Messianic Ideas in Philo," in *The Messiah*, edited by James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg & Fortress, 1992), 341–61.

οικοδομεῖσθε; Imperative or Indicative

A minor problem not so much related to the aspect of priesthood as to the general character of the section 2:1–10 is the question if 1 Peter 2:4–5 is to be understood as an exhortation expressed by an imperative form of the verb, or if it is to be read as a statement of their present condition. Scholars are widely divided on this issue, a disagreement which has also resulted in various translations of these verses in the Bible versions of the churches. The number of scholars favouring the imperative³³ among those consulted here seems to be a little lower than those who prefer reading it as indicative.³⁴ Some abstain, stating that the question is insoluble.³⁵ A recent investigation by L. Thurén has also voiced the suggestion that the expression is ambiguous on purpose³⁶ because of the various reader situations envisaged by the author. In light of the fact that the letter contains several such ambiguous expressions, the view of Thurén might be worthy of further consideration. According to him the author of 1 Peter may have had various audiences in mind when phrasing his expressions, hence the ambiguity.

Our Philonic readers, having grasped that the passage is concerned with the “common priesthood”, would probably not have

³³ Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and of St. Jude*, 128; Brun, *Förste Peters Brev*, 80; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 94ff; Ch. H. Talbert, “Once Again: The Plan of 1 Peter,” in *Perspectives on First Peter*, edited by Ch. H. Talbert, Special Studies Series (Macon, Ga: Mercer University Press, 1986), 141–51; Martin, Troy W., *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 180.

³⁴ Blinzler, “IERATEYMA: Zur Exegese von 1 Peter 2,5 u 9,” 50; Elliott, *The Elect*, 18; Frédéric Manns, “‘La Maison Où Réside l’Esprit’: 1 Peter 2,5 et Son Arrière-Plan Juif,” *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Liber Annus* 34 (1984): 207–24; Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 159; Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 89; Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter. The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, 119; Olsson, *Första Petrusbrevet*, 71; Hiebert, *First Peter: An Expositional Commentary*, 119f; Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, 98; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 97.100.

³⁵ Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe. Der Judasbriefe*, p. 58, note 2: “Es wird kaum zu entscheiden sein, ob *οικοδομεῖσθε* Indikativ oder Imperativ ist.”

³⁶ Thurén, *The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter with Special Regard to Ambiguous Expressions*, 28.140.176.

opted for the imperative. To them, the Jewish nation *was* an οἶκος for the Lord (Sobr. 66), and the “common priesthood” was something given by God to the people of Israel at large, and especially displayed in their Passover celebrations, in their prayers and sacrifices (cf. Mos. 2,224; Spec. 2,145ff; QE 2,12). Hence, I suggest, they would have opted for the indicative.

οἶκος; House, Building or Temple, or ?

The readers are encouraged to ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος (2:5). A pivotal question for the understanding of the priesthood mentioned here and in v. 9 is how should this term οἶκος be understood: does it denote a house, or a household, or should it be understood as “temple”, pointing to the community as a new temple?

In and by itself the term could be translated “house, building”, but this literal meaning is obviously not the point of 1 Peter, as it states that they are οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς, that is, (to be) built up as a spiritual house. Some critical readers read this expression as denoting that the community has become the eschatological temple of God as promised in, for example, Ezekiel, 1 Enoch; 1 QS 8.5–10 and other (inter)testamental writings.³⁷ Others scholars, probably most, find it hard to escape the impression that the neighbouring terms εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον, ἀνενέγκαι, πνευματικὰς θυσίας and εὐπροσδέκτους [τῷ] θεῷ should make one infer that the term is to be understood as Temple, that is, that the “house” is explicated by these terms which are clearly associated with the central sacrificial activity carried out in the Temple.³⁸ Hence one might translate (if

³⁷ Cf. Manns, “‘la Maison Où Réside l’Esprit’ 1 Peter 2,5 et Son Arrière-Plan Juif,” 207ff; Fiorenza, *Priester Für Gott*, 53ff.99ff. Cf. also Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 98 who characterizes it as “allegorisch . . . Haus: Die überall vertretene Deutung des ‘Häuses’ als Tempel is ebenfalls Eintragung (von ἱεράτευμα her und aus anderen ntl. texten).”

³⁸ Cf. Blinzler, “IERATEYMA: Zur Exegese von 1 Peter 2,5 u 9,” 54; J. Coppens, “Le Sacerdoce royal des fidèles: un Commentaire de I Peter, II, 4–10,” in *Le Sacerdoce*, in *Au Service de la Parole de Dieu*, edited by J. Duculot, Melanges Offerts

indicative): “You are being built up as a Temple, as a holy priesthood, . . .” E. Best, for instance, states that

. . . when specific reference is made in the LXX to the building (οικοδομεῖν) of the temple the noun used in association with οικοδομεῖν is almost always οἶκος (see especially 3 kgdms. v–vii; 1 Chron. vi,xvii; 2 Chron. ii–vi 1 Esdras i,ii,v,vi; Hagg.; Zach.). It occurs about ten times as frequently as the next most common word (νόος). To a mind so saturated as Peter’s was with the language of the LXX the two words οἶκος and οικοδομεῖν together would inevitable imply the Temple.³⁹

This view is, however, severely criticized by J.H. Elliott in his book *The Elect and the Holy*, and we need to have a closer look at his arguments as he also adduces Philo in support of his view.

According to Elliott’s reading, 2:4–5 is to be understood as an explication of 2:6–10 and not vice versa. And the main focus of the passage 2:4ff is the issue of election and holiness, but not that of priesthood. The οἶκος is here to be understood as “house” and “household”, not as temple. Elliott argues here in two ways: first he argues from the expression βασιλείον ιεράτευμα in 2:9, which he takes as consisting of two substantives, and to be translated “a king’s house” resp. “a royal house”, and “priesthood”. We shall deal further with this expression below. Elliott argues from this understanding back to 2:5 so as to make οἶκος equivalent with βασιλείον, both to be translated “house” in view of the building terms in 2:5–6 and “household” in light of the household codes in 2:13–14.

à Mgr. A.M. Charue (Gembloux, 1969), 61–75, here p. 71: “maison, édifice.” “. . . mais concédons qu’en raison de voisinage de ιεράτευμα le sens de “temple” se présente tout de suite à l’esprit.”; cf. also Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament: A Comparative Study in the Temple Symbolism of the Qumran Texts and the New Testament*, 73; McKelvey, *The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament*, 128, and the commentaries of Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 89; Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter. The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, 122; Hiebert, *First Peter: An Expository Commentary*, 122; Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, 99; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 100.

³⁹ Best, “1 Peter II 4–10: A Reconsideration,” 280.

He also tries, then, to come to terms with the arguments for understanding οἶκος as temple. This interpretation, however, he thinks is rendered implausible by the following aspects: when Christians are described as the "temple of God" in the New Testament, οἶκος is never used; aside from 1 Peter 2:4ff it never occurs in connection with the λίθος complex; οἶκος is not specific designation for "temple"; and the context does not point to the image of temple, but to an analogy of building and growth. But above all, he seems to be of the opinion that the interpretation of οἶκος as temple is mostly due to the view that the pericope was intended as an anti-Jewish polemic enunciating the finality of the institutional cult. When this view fails, there is not enough left to substantiate the understanding of this term as signifying "temple".

Elliott's arguments are coherent, but obviously not watertight, as he has not been followed by many. His arguments are closely connected with his understanding of βασιλειον ιεράτευμα, with his understanding of the sacrificial aspects involved, and the meaning of πνευματικὰς θυσίας and ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε in 2:9. If his views on these aspects can be made implausible, his understanding of οἶκος as house/household *contra* temple can scarcely stand.⁴⁰ But he is right in seeing the understanding of 2:5 closely related to 2:9.

There are no references in the works of Philo to the eschatological temple as we know it from, for example, Ezekiel. As Philo's works are predominantly expositions of the Books of Moses, the Torah, there are little of the eschatological and messianic expectations of the Prophets. So if οἰκοδομεῖσθε is taken as an imperative, our

⁴⁰ Cf. L. Goppelt, *Der Erste Petrusbrief*, Krit.-Exeg. Kommentar (Meyer) (Göttingen, 1978), 145: "Nach ELLIOTT soll οἶκος an unserer Stell die Bedeutung "Haus" als Bau und als familia haben, aber nicht als Tempel. Das Bild von Stein schließt jedoch den in der LXX wie im NT geläufigen Sinn von Haus als Familia hier aus. Dass, freilich unbetont, an den Tempel gedacht ist, wird durch die Vorgeschichte des Bildes nahegelegt: Die einzige andere οἶκος-Stelle im 1 Peter, in 4.17, nimmt die geläufige LXX-Bezeichnung οἶκος θεοῦ für den Tempel auf (vgl. Ri 17.5; Jes 56.7 u.ö.). Im unmittelbaren Kontext erinnern das Stichwort "Priesterschaft" wie der in V. 4 anklingende Text Jes 28.16 an den Tempel"; cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 100.

reader would not think about the eschatological temple. And taken as an indicative, it would still be rather non-eschatological.

But if, as will be argued below, the Philonic understanding of βασιλειον in Sobr. 66 reads it as denoting “temple”, and that the people as such is explained as the “King’s House,” that is, a temple, our Philonic reader would, accordingly, not be totally unfamiliar with the description of the people as temple. As the βασιλειον of Exod 19:6 is only found twice in Philo’s works, however, our Philonic reader would not have much material to work with. Or to state this more negatively; there is not much, if anything at all, in Philo’s works either that would make our Philonic reader suggest the meaning of “house, household” for the οἶκος/βασιλειον cluster of 1 Peter 2:5+9. The understanding of this issue in both 1 Peter and Philo is highly dependent upon one’s understanding of the expression βασιλειον ιεράτευμα. Hence we turn to this issue.

βασιλειον ιεράτευμα; Two Nouns or Adjective and Noun?

The crucial issues here are whether the βασιλειον ιεράτευμα consists of two nouns or a substantive with a preceding adjective, and whether the ιεράτευμα denotes a corporation (Körperschaft) or a function. We shall deal with these issues in this and the following section.

The Old Testament background of 1 Peter 2:5+9 is undoubtedly Exod 19:6. Hence the meaning of this passage in its Old Testament context and in later translations and usages are important for understanding 1 Peter 2:5+9.

The relevant MT part of Exod 19:6 runs thus: כִּהְיִים וְנִגִּי קָדוֹשׁ מִמְּלֶכֶת. The text is considered as difficulty to categorize as belonging to any of the prevalent sources associated with the J.E.D.P. denominators, and is considered very old.⁴¹ It is probably so old

⁴¹ Elliott, *The Elect*, 51; Fiorenza, *Priester Für Gott*, 120: “Ganz schwer aber lassen sich die Verse 3–8 in eine der Pentateuchquellen einordnen, weshalb sie im Laufe der Forschung abwechselnd allen Pentateuchquellen zugeschrieben worden sind.”

that it should not be considered originally to have been anti-levitical or anti-cultic, but rather reflecting the early period where there was no specialized priesthood.⁴² The translation of the expression מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים is not obvious, but most probably it is to be understood as a *status constructus* composition where nomen regens is followed by the nomen rectum. Hence it should be translated as "kingdom of priests". As it now stands, Elliott is probably right when he states that it denotes the aspect of separation and hence of holiness of Israel with regard to the world at large (cf. Exod 23.22).⁴³ The people of Israel as a whole are to consider themselves as priests, a kingdom of priests, enjoying access to him as typical of priests.

In the LXX this part of Exod 19:6 is translated thus: (ὁμεῖς δὲ ἔσεσθέ μοι) βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα καὶ ἔθνος ἅγιον, which is also the expression used in 1 Peter 2:5+9 (cf. also Exod 23.22; Isa. 61:6). The *crux interpretum* here is the form ἱεράτευμα which is late in origin and absent in profane Greek texts.⁴⁴ Exod 19:6 is also alluded to or reflected in a few more texts, that is, a Greek fragment of Test. Levi 11:6; 2 Macc 2:17 and Philo's Sobr. 66 and Abr. 56.

How should then the expression βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα be read? We might again stick to Elliott's work, as it is he who has argued most emphatically in recent times that the expression both in Exod 19:6 and 1 Peter 2:5+9 is to be read as consisting of two nouns. He argues his view, inter alia, on the basis of the following observations:⁴⁵ the word order of Exod 19:6 LXX is in all points identical to that of MT;⁴⁶ the proportion of its occurrences in the LXX as substantive in comparison with those as adjectives (24 substantives—2 adjectives) argues strongly for a substantival function here too;⁴⁷

⁴² Fiorenza, *Priester Für Gott*, 137ff; Elliott, *The Elect*, 56f.

⁴³ Elliott, *The Elect*, 53ff.

⁴⁴ Elliott, *The Elect*, 64.

⁴⁵ Elliott, *The Elect*, 72.

⁴⁶ That depends, however, on the understanding of the Hebrew construction, cf. Fiorenza, *Priester Für Gott*, 108f.

⁴⁷ The existence of at least two occurrences as adjectives, however, demonstrates that the adjectival understanding is not impossible.

the ancient versions and allusions treat the first term of βασιλειον ιεράτευμα as a noun.⁴⁸ Hence Elliott suggests βασιλειον should be translated as “kingdom” or “royal residence”. The view expressed by this formulation is, furthermore, to be especially associated with the Diaspora communities, and in particular with Alexandria, as the LXX as a translation work, 2. Maccabees and Philo belong here.

The interpretation of 1 Peter 2:5+9 is thus made problematic as the Old Testament texts that is considered the origin of the expression βασιλειον ιεράτευμα as well as the related intertestamental texts can be variously interpreted. If one could decide an exegetical problem by counting adherents to the various solutions set forth, the understanding of βασιλειον ιεράτευμα as consisting of an adjective plus a substantive would probably take the lead⁴⁹ compared to those reading it as two nouns.⁵⁰ But there are also those who abstain, stating that the question must “be open, and can not be given an unambiguous answer”,⁵¹ or that the alternatives do not represent

⁴⁸ The 2 Macc 2.17 is not that easy to use as argument since it is so closely related to the situation of the Maccabees, and only vaguely alludes to Exod 19.6.

The Philo passages are much closer: In both Sobr 66 and in Abr. 65 Philo has placed a καὶ between βασιλειον and ιεράτευμα. Furthermore, in Sobr. 66 βασιλειον is explicitly understood as “house”, the “Kings’s House, which is holy indeed and the only inviolable sanctuary.” That Philo here understands House as Temple, is downplayed, to say the least, by Elliott (Elliott, *The Elect*, 56f; contrast Lucien Cerfaux, “Royale Sacerdotium,” *Revue Des Sciences Philosophiques et Theologiques* 28 [1939]: 15.

⁴⁹ Cf. Cerfaux, “Royale Sacerdotium,” 10.13; cf. Blinzler, “IERATEYMA: Zur Exegese von 1 Peter 2,5 u 9,” 61, adjectival; Coppens, “Le Sacerdoce royal des fidèles: un Commentaire de I Peter, II, 4–10,” 71; adjectif; Fiorenza, *Priester Für Gott*, 96: adjectival? Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe. Der Judasbriefe*, 64: “königliche Priesterschaft”; Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 96: “as a royal house, a body of priests” . . . “designating Christians in their corporate capacity rather than as individuals”; Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter. The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, 130: “. . . unquestionable used as an adjective here.”; Goppelt, L., *Der Erste Petrusbrief*, 152f: adjective—königlich; Olsson, *Första Petrusbrevet*, 81; Hiebert, *First Peter: An Expositional Commentary*, 132; a royal priesthood.

⁵⁰ Cf. Best, “I Peter II 4–10: A Reconsideration,” 288f., a noun; Elliott, *The Elect*, 64ff.149f (esp. on LXX) noun!; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 103: “. . . als Substantiv zu verstehen.”; Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 165f.

⁵¹ Fiorenza, *Priester Für Gott*, 101.

great variations in meaning.⁵² On the other hand, these latter two views seem to be a small minority view. Most scholars dealing with the problem tend to presuppose that a decision here influences the view of the "common priesthood" concerned, and Elliott's work seems to have made that most explicit. Those disagreeing with Elliott seem to make their decisions more in light of the context in 1 Peter 2:5+9 than by the grammatical form of βασιλειον ιεράτευμα alone.

Let us have a closer look at how Philo understands Exod 19:6. Philo utilizes Exod 19:6 only in Abr. 56 and Sobr. 66. The relevant parts here are:

Abr. 56:—the oracles speak of this august and precious trinity as parent of one species of that race, which species is called "βασιλειον" (Colson: royal) and "ιεράτευμα" and "holy nation" (βασιλειον καὶ ιεράτευμα καὶ εἶδους ἅγιον οἱ χρησμοὶ καλοῦσι)

Sobr. 66: Once more Jacob is the source of the twelve tribes, of whom the oracles say that they are "βασιλειον" (Colson: palace) and ιεράτευμα of God" (ὥς οἱ χρησμοὶ βασιλειον καὶ ιεράτευμα Θεοῦ φασιν εἶναι..) thus following in due sequence the thought originated in Shem, in whose houses it was prayed that God might dwell. For surely by "βασιλειον" is meant the King's house, which is holy indeed and the only inviolable sanctuary (ιερός ὄντως καὶ μόνος ἄσυλος)

First one might note the significant feature in both of these verses represented by the καὶ inserted by Philo between βασιλειον and ιεράτευμα; hence he probably read these terms as two nouns. Furthermore, in neither context does he elaborate much on either of the two terms. The ιεράτευμα of Abr. 56 might, however, be explained by Abr. 98, as we shall soon see, and it should not be overlooked that the βασιλειον of Sobr. 66 is immediately explained as "Kings house, which is holy indeed and the only inviolable sanctuary."

On the basis of these passages, *inter alia*, Cerfaux has suggested that in the current applications of Exod 19:6, there was a trajectory in the Diaspora different from that of Palestine. In Palestine

⁵² Goppelt, L., *Der Erste Petrusbrief*, 152, note 65.

the βασιλείον, which was read to represent the kingly, messianic part, was focused, while in the Diaspora the priestly aspect represented by ἱεράτευμα was more accentuated.⁵³ This is not very probable, as some of the texts that he adduces for the Palestinian view clearly belong to the Diaspora (e.g., 2 Maccabees).

Cerfaux explains the absence of any further development of ἱεράτευμα in Philo's texts thus: "He does not elaborate on the issues as they were familiar. He knew that, by privilege, the Jews were the priestly people" (transl. TS).⁵⁴ This is rather convincing in light of Abr. 98, but Cerfaux's interpretation is denied by Elliott. This may be due to his ignorance of Abr. 98; in fact, it is never cited in his work, nor is it ever referred to. It is thus not quite convincing when he states that

Though Philo does indeed make numerous references to the priestly character of Israel, *such references have absolutely no bearing upon our two texts*. Not only is the terminology different, but also the texts and contexts have nothing in common. No thought on the priesthood of Israel is being developed in either of our texts.⁵⁵ (emphasis mine)

Elliott is right in some of what he asserts: the terminology is different, and there is no development of the idea of priesthood. But this concept is so pervasive in Philo's works that it should be taken account of here too. This reading, I suggest, is confirmed by Abr. 98. Here Philo still deals with one of the triad of Abr. 48–59 (i.e., Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), namely Abraham. In Abr. 98 it is stated that from Abraham's marriage was not to issue only a family, "but a whole nation, and that the nation dearest of all to God, which, as I hold, has received the gift of priesthood (ἱερωσύνην) and prophecy on behalf of all mankind." Here too the priesthood is mentioned

⁵³ Cerfaux, "Royale Sacerdotium," 19.

⁵⁴ Cerfaux, "Royale Sacerdotium," 16. Cerfaux here adduces Abr. 98; Spec.leg. 2:162–167; Spec.leg. 1:4 (243). Cf. also Blinzler, "IERATEYMA: Zur Exegese von 1 Peter 2,5 u 9," 59.

⁵⁵ Elliott, *The Elect*, 101. Among the references he adduces where Philo deal with the priesthood, the Abr. 98 is lacking (cf. footnote 2). Nor does it show up in the index of Elliott's book.

just in passing, without any development or elaboration on the term in the context. Hence, Abr. 98 might very well be read in light of Abr. 56, and vice versa.

The term βασίλειον is not, however, given any further explanation in Abr. 56 so it is not possible from the text or its immediate context to determine how Philo understood that term. In the other text (Sobr. 66), however, this is exactly the term explained in the following way: "For surely by "βασίλειον" is meant the King's house, which is holy indeed and the only inviolable sanctuary" (βασίλειον γὰρ ὁ βασιλέως δῆπουθεν οἶκος, ἱερὸς ὄντως καὶ μόνος ἄσυλος). Jacob is here described as the source of Israel, the twelve tribes, and they are "the βασίλειον and ἱεράτευμα of God" (ἅς οἱ χρησμοὶ βασίλειον καὶ ἱεράτευμα Θεοῦ φασιν εἶναι). Is this βασίλειον to be understood as "house", "royal palace" only,⁵⁶ or even as "Temple"?⁵⁷ Considering the fact that the king mentioned obviously is God himself, and that the only place in which God can be "housed" is the Temple, the translation of βασίλειον might as well be "Temple" (cf. Spec. 1,67–68.). God has no other house than his temple; this is also strengthened by Philo's use of the term ἱερὸς which here point to "temple." Hence Israel is here described as the temple of God.

ἱεράτευμα; Corporative or Individualistic, or Denoting rather a Function?

Elliott understands the priestly dignity expressed in Exod 19:6 as belonging to Israel as a whole, not to the individuals:

As the holy people of God, Israel was thought to have a priestly obligation toward her environment; namely that of remaining holy and faithful to the true God. Her constant task was the maintenance of her sanctity and exclusiveness in contrast to the holy cults and holy regimes of a holiness-intoxicated yet pagan environment.⁵⁸

The holiness motive is here again emphasized. This emphasis is, however, considered as a narrowing by Fiorenza, and she states

⁵⁶ Elliott, *The Elect*, 100.

⁵⁷ Cerfaux, "Royale Sacerdotium," 15.

⁵⁸ Elliott, *The Elect*, 74.

that any adequate translation of the term has to take account of its inherent threefold potentiality of meaning.⁵⁹

The discussions of the “common priesthood” of 1 Peter 2:5+9 have often taken issue with the character of that priesthood: is it something that is given to the Christians as a collective, or is it (also) individualistic? It is perhaps one of the questions presented here that is most influenced by the denominational stance of the readers involved, hence it might be futile to discuss it any further. Accepting, however, that we all have our presuppositions, the arguments brought forth for the various positions should be considered. And then one might ask: would a Philonic reader grasp this problem, and if so, how would he or she read the text?

Blinzler is one of those who bluntly states that “ἱεράτευμα means priesthood, corporation of priests, not priestly office.”⁶⁰ Best, on his part, says that the “NT evidence cannot be said to suggest that priesthood is corporate or belongs to the church as church and not to the members composing the church.”⁶¹ Grudem⁶² focuses even more on the individual as having priestly functions:

⁵⁹ She states that ἱεράτευμα “meint dann eine Gemeinschaft oder Körperschaft von solchen Menschen, die das Amt und die Funktion von Priestern haben. . . . Eine adäquate Übersetzung von ἱεράτευμα muss also den dreifachen Bedeutungscharacter des Terminus, nämlich seinen personalen Bezug, seine aktiv-funktionale Bestimmtheit und seinen Gemeinschafts- und Kollektivitätscharacter zum Ausdruck bringen.” Fiorenza, *Priester Für Gott*, 83; cf. also Elliott, *The Elect*, 166.

⁶⁰ Blinzler, “IERATEYMA: Zur Exegese von 1 Peter 2,5 u 9,” 55; Goppelt, L., *Der Erste Petrusbrief*, 145, note 34: “Sie kennzeichnet die Priesterschaft als Körperschaft, nicht als Funktion.”

⁶¹ Ernest Best, “Spiritual Sacrifice: General Priesthood in the New Testament,” *Interpretation* 14 (1960): 273–99, here p. 279. cf. p. 287: “. . . just as a Christian cannot exist in isolation but is always such as the member of a church, so Christians exercise priestly functions but always as members of a group who all exercise the same functions.” See also Coppens, “Le Sacerdoce royal des fidèles: un Commentaire de I Peter, II, 4–10,” 70: “corps sacerdotal”, cf. p. 72: “N’en concluons pas qu’il l’exclut pour les individus. C’est à eux que la parénèse s’adresse.”

⁶² Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, 101; cf. also Hiebert, *First Peter: An Expositional Commentary*, 123 on v. 5: “It may be understood either as an abstract noun, the office of priesthood, or as a collective singular noun that denotes the body of persons who function as priests. The latter is the meaning in verse 9. That is also probably its meaning here, since it stands alongside the collective term “house”.”

This verse (v. 5) thus gives explicit statement to the doctrine of the 'priesthood of believers'. Since all who come to Christ are now a holy priesthood, able continually to draw near to God's very presence and offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, there can no longer be an elite priesthood with claims of special access to God, or special privileges in worship or in fellowship with God.

The functional aspects is especially focused by Beare.⁶³

The noun ἱεράτευμα may have either of two senses: it may be collective, meaning 'body of priests', . . . or it may be used concretely, of 'the exercise of priestly functions'. The latter is more appropriate here, both because of the preposition εἰς, which distinguishes it from the use in apposition which we have in v. 9, and because of the epexegetic infinitive ἀνεύγκαι which follows, defining the nature of the priestly function which is exercised.

If we then ask how a Philonic reader would read these aspects of 1 Peter 2:5+9, we have to argue not so much from verbal agreements or disagreements as from concepts. As Philo inserts a καί between these two terms in Abr. 56 and Sobr. 66, he probably read them as two nouns; how our Philonic reader would take the formula of 1 Peter is, however, hard to say. I have argued above against Elliott's statement that Philo's view of the priesthood of Israel, the "priesthood of the faithful", has nothing to do with the Exod 19:6 formula. Hence we can in the following draw on Philo's references to this particular priesthood.

In the research on 1 Peter 2:5+9 the question has been posed if the priesthood involved in ἱεράτευμα is corporative or individualistic in nature, and/or whether it denotes a function. The "common priesthood" of Philo is primarily corporate: it is the Jewish nation as a nation that is priest because of the cult of the Jerusalem temple and the various feasts (Abr. 98; Mos. 1,149; 2,224; Spec. 2,145). The corporative emphasis may be seen in Mos. 2,224 (cf. Spec. 2,145) where Philo says that

⁶³ Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter. The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, 122.

at the festival called in Hebrew *Pascha*, on which the victims are not brought to the altar by the laity and sacrificed by the priests, but, as commanded by the law, *the whole nation acts as priest* (ἱεράται; 3.p. sg.), each individual bringing what he offers on his own behalf and dealing with it with his own hands.

Here it is not said that the laymen act as *priests* (plural), but that “the whole nation acts as priest” (third person singular). But in the immediate context he says “each feeling that he had the honour of priesthood” (Mos. 2,225; cf. Spec. 145: “. . . old and young alike . . . raised for that particular day to the dignity of the priesthood”), and in Spec. 1,243 he can say about those who follow the Law and purify themselves that their resolution “has given them a place in the sacerdotal caste and advanced them to equal honour with the priest” (cf. also Spec. 2,164; QE 2,10 above).⁶⁴

But it must be pointed out that this “priesthood” relates primarily to the Passover and its rites carried out in the homes; otherwise the nation as a whole is the object of attention. Hence each individual is a priest if he or she follows the Law, and together they as a nation are “for the world what the priest is for the state” (Spec. 2,162; Gig. 61). Modern readers must beware of their Western individualism. Our Philonic reader most probably would have sensed the dignity bestowed on the individual, but to him or her a primary focus would also have been the corporative aspect, the nation of God.

We see here that the various critical readers’ views of this issue are greatly influenced by their understanding of the textual context of 1 Peter 2:5+9, and by what they consider to be the purpose and function of this priesthood. We can, therefore, now turn to this last aspect of the priesthood of 1 Peter 2:5+9.

⁶⁴ In the same way Philo can also say that the Jewish nation as a collective is God’s portion (Spec. 4,180; Legat 3; Post 89.93), but also that God has taken “all members of the nation for His portion” (Spec. 4,159).

The Role of the Priesthood: ἐξαγγείλητε; Proclaim or Praise?

The purpose of the "common priesthood" is given thus in v. 5: εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπροσδέκτους [τῷ] θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; and in v. 9 the role is given thus: ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς. We might consider the expression of v. 5 first.

ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας. The language used here is clearly derived from the sacrificial language of the OT (cf. Lev 14:20; 16:25; 17:5f; Isa 57:6 etc.). But what is meant by πνευματικὰς θυσίας?

This expression, and other similar ones in the New Testament (cf. e.g., Rom 12:1f; Hebr 15:5) have been central in expositions of what have been called the *spiritualizing* views of the early Christians in their relations to the Jewish cult. "Spiritual" in this context is often thought of as something immaterial in contrast to the material, or of sacrifices of a higher level than the bloody victims of the Jewish sacrificial cult. One influential study dealing with this view is that of H. Wenschkewitz.⁶⁵

He differentiates, furthermore, between two variants of spiritualization, "eine reflektierte und eine naive" (p. 9). The more naive is represented by the Old Testament prophets, the Psalms, and partly by the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, and in the New Testament. The more "reflektierte" is represented by Philo and the Stoa.

Both Elliott and Fiorenza have taken issue with such kinds of understanding, claiming that when applied to 1 Peter 2:9, they do not take seriously the expression πνευματικὰς as a term to be understood in light of the New Testament concept of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ According to him, such spiritualization "bedeutet zunächst, dass die Frömmigkeitsformen geistiger Art die Ausdrucksformen der kultischen Frömmigkeit für sich in Anspruch nehmen, sie in Sinnzusammenhänge ihrer Gestalt einfügen und dadurch umdeuten." Wenschkewitz, *Die Spiritualisierung*, 8. See now also the brief review of Everett Ferguson, "Spiritual Sacrifice in Early Christianity and Its Environment," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt II. Prinzipat 23:2 Religion*, edited by Wolfgang Haase (Berlin New York, 1980), 1151–90.

⁶⁶ Cf. Elliott, *The Elect*, 154–57; Fiorenza, *Priester Für Gott*, 50f; cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, "Cultic Language in Qumran and in the NT."

“The adjective πνευματικός qualifies the terms ‘house’ and ‘sacrifice’ as eschatological gifts of the Spirit, but does not imply a spiritualization of the Christian worship.”⁶⁷ Hence Fiorenza prefers not to speak of a spiritualization of cultic institutions, but rather “a transference of cultic concepts to an originally non-cultic entity”,⁶⁸ that is, a transference of cultic-institutional language to the community.

Such a “Kultisierung” is present in several of the New Testament works, and in addition to the understanding of the death of Christ as a sacrifice (cf. Mark 10:45; esp. Hebrews), it covers several aspects of the communal life of the first Christians.⁶⁹

Some readers⁷⁰ have seen an eucharistic reference in the πνευματικὰς θυσίας of 2:5, but this interpretation has not won through. Most often, when interpreting this text, recent critical readers (commentaries) seem to focus on the loving service of Christians to God, their deeds of charity to each other, and their praises and thanksgiving to God.⁷¹ Other references adduced as understood in the

⁶⁷ Schüssler Fiorenza, “Cultic Language in Qumran and in the NT,” 174.

⁶⁸ “eine Kultisierung einer im ursprünglichen Sinne nicht kultischen Realität.” Fiorenza, *Priester Für Gott*, 50.

⁶⁹ Cf. Ferguson, “Spiritual Sacrifice in Early Christianity and Its Environment,” who summarizes the various aspects thus: 1. Praise and thanksgiving (Hebr 13:15; 2. Benevolence (Hebr 13:16); 3. Preaching (Rom 15:15–21; Phil 2:17); 4. Financial support or preaching (Phil 4:18); 5. Life (Rom 12:1; 1 Peter 2:5). Cf. esp. on Paul: K. Weiss, “Paulus Als Priester der Christlichen Gemeinde,” *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 79 (1954): 355–64.

⁷⁰ E.g., Best, “Spiritual Sacrifice: General Priesthood in the New Testament,” 279; Cerfaux, “Royale Sacerdotium,” 26; Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 101; contra Elliott, *The Elect*, 186ff.

⁷¹ E.g., Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 91; Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter. The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, 123; Hiebert, *First Peter: An Expository Commentary*, 124; Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, 101f. Cf. also especially Elliott, *The Elect*, 179 who sees the spiritual sacrifices as explicated by the terms ἀναστροφή and ἀγαθοποιία as set forth in 1 Peter 1.15.18; 2.12; 3.1.2.16; 3.11; 2.15.20; 3.6.17; and, following him, Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 99: “Die Rede von ‘Priesterschaft’ bleibt in 1 Peter 2.5.9 ganz auf der Ebene von Bild und Symbol. . . .” “Folglich ist die ‘Opferdarbringung’ der Gemeinde als ‘Priesterschaft’ hier einzig möglich auf dem Glauben entsprechende Leben (ἀναστροφή) zu deuten.”

same vein are Rom 12:1 and Hebr 13:15.⁷² The spiritual sacrifices are, accordingly, exposed in the attitudes and works towards other people, their direction is horizontal. This understanding is so much more emphasized when one comes to the parallel expression in 1 Peter 2:9.

Here it might be interesting to compare Philo's view of the sacrifices. Again we find that Philo provides rather lengthy expositions of the material sacrifices brought forth in the Temple. He differentiates between those sacrificed for the people or rather for all humankind, the burnt offerings (Spec. 1,168–89), and those for each separate individual (ibid. 1,190–256). But his expositions of various Old Testament regulations are concrete and extensive. There is no doubt that the sacrifices of the temple are important, and not to be neglected nor abolished.

In some of his expositions of the material sacrifices he may also include expositions of their symbolic and moral meanings, that is, in Philo's words, "the mystical character which symbols convey". In Spec. 1,198–211, for instance, he elaborates on the whole-burnt offering.⁷³

Philo is here, and in other passages (cf. Spec. 1,214–54.287–95) concerned with both the symbolic and moral inferences to be drawn from the sacrifices. In fact, in these kinds of interpretations, his focus is on the ethical values of the sacrifices carried out.⁷⁴ Furthermore, these interpretations should not be called "spiritualizing": they are not given as substitutions for other, more literal understandings,

⁷² See especially A. Feuillet, "Les Sacrifices Spirituels Du Sacerdoce Royal Des Baptises (1 Peter 2,5) et Leur Preparation dans l'Ancien Testament," *Nouvelle Revue Theologique* 106/96 (1974): 704–28.

⁷³ We might bring one example from Spec. 1,205: "The blood is poured in a circle round the altar because the circle is the most perfect of figures, and in order that no part should be left destitute of the vital oblation. For the blood may truly be called a libation of the life-principle. So, then, he teaches in this symbol that the mind, whole and complete, should, as it moves with measured tread passing circlewise through every phase of word and intention, and deed, shew its willingness to do God's service."

⁷⁴ Cf. Wenschkewitz, *Die Spiritualisierung*, 77.

but they represent *actualizations* of the meanings of the sacrifices: “words in their plain sense are symbols of things latent and obscure” (Spec. 1,200; cf. 2,287).

In another text he can say that it is in fact not possible to express our gratitude to God in an adequate way by means of buildings and oblations and sacrifices, as other people do. “Nay, it must be expressed by means of hymns of praise, and these not such as the audible voice shall sing, but strains raised and re-echoed by the mind too pure for eye to discern them” (Plant. 126). Commenting on an old myth about God who after the creation was told that everything was perfect except that the creatures needed means of praise—and God made the Muses—Philo draws the lesson “one work is incumbent upon us, namely thanksgiving. Let us always and everywhere make this our study, using voice and skilful pen. Let us never tire of composing eulogies in prose and poetry . . .” (Plant. 131). This, in fact, comes near to substituting praise for sacrifice, but the intention of Philo is rather that the innermost function of sacrifice is praise, and so praise comes near to sacrifice.⁷⁵

But if the interpretations given in *De Specialibus Legibus* are more directed to the ethical meanings of sacrifices, there are many much more elaborate expositions in the allegorical works. These are most often characterized by the catchword “spiritualizing”,⁷⁶ but again, they concern a kind of transference of sacrificial language to the life of the soul, hence they might also be called “psychologizing” interpretations. A more controversial issue may be what are the pri-

⁷⁵ Cf. also this statement of Philo (Spec. 1,271f): “. . . he needs none of them (i.e., the sacrifices) but He rejoices in the will to love Him and in men that practise holiness. . . . And indeed though the worshippers bring nothing else, in bringing themselves they offer the best of sacrifices, the full and truly oblation of noble living, as they honour with hymns and thanksgivings their Benefactor and Saviour, God (ὕμνοις καὶ εὐχαριστίαις τὸν εὐεργέτην καὶ σωτήρα θεὸν γεραίροντες), sometimes with the organs of speech, sometimes without tongue or lips, when within the soul alone their minds recite the tale or utter the cry of praise.”

⁷⁶ Cf. Wenschkewitz, *Die Spiritualisierung*, 81f; Nikiprowetzky, ‘La Spiritualization’, pp. 102–109.

mary sacrifices according to Philo: is it the material ones of the temple or the "spiritual," that is, that which takes place in the soul of the virtuous? According to Nikiprowetzky, "the really true cult is for Philo, as it is for the Scriptures and for the Greek philosophers, the spiritual cult."⁷⁷ But somewhat later in the same article he can state: "The sacrificial cult in Jerusalem retains, however, in the eyes of Philo, the primary importance. It is legitimate to think that, in comparison to the spiritual cult, it retains for him the primary reality."⁷⁸

Hence it is not a question of the one or the other; both are real. But the literal and material cult of Jerusalem is the primary one. The more allegorical expositions of Philo are not spiritualizing in the same way as in the works of Greek philosophers and the later Christians. Rather, Philo's interpretations retain the literal, but elaborate on it in order to reveal the depths of God's truth therein.⁷⁹

ἐξαγγείλητε. In 1 Peter 2:9 the purpose of the βασιλείον ιερὰ-
 τευμα is given as ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς
 καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς. The understanding of this
 statement hinges on our interpretation of the term ἐξαγγείλητε which
 is slightly different from the term used in Isa 43:21, its Old Testa-
 ment basis.⁸⁰ It is probably no overstatement to say that the *com-*
munis opinio of this term is something like "declare",⁸¹ "preach",⁸²

⁷⁷ Nikiprowetzky, "La Spiritualization Des Sacrifices," 102; cf. Wenschkewitz, *Die Spiritualisierung*, 82: "Der äussere Kultus ist ihm nur Hinweis auf das viel wichtigere, innerseelische Geschehen, auf die mystische Hingabe der Seele an Gott."

⁷⁸ Nikiprowetzky, "La Spiritualization Des Sacrifices," 102.

⁷⁹ Cf. also the similar view of Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria A Critical and Synthetical Survey of Research Since World War II," 114–15.

⁸⁰ Cf. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter. The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, 128: on the change of terms here: "... the infinitive διηγῆσθαι is replaced by ὅπως ... ἐξαγγείλητε, perhaps through the influence of Psalm 9:15—ὅπως ἂν ἐξαγγείλω πάσας τὰς αἰνέσεις σου: 'That I may proclaim all thy praises'."

⁸¹ E.g., Best, "Spiritual Sacrifice: General Priesthood in the New Testament," 279: "declare the righteous deeds of God".

⁸² E.g., Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter. The Greek Text with Introduction and*

proclaim”,⁸³ “bring witness”,⁸⁴ “announce”,⁸⁵ all terms that may be considered as synonyms. Hence, they are all focusing on the public preaching and proclamation of the Gospel (cf. τὰς ἀρετὰς) to the world. It is not directed towards God, nor to the insiders, but primarily towards those on the outside.

J. Coppens may, however, if I understand him correctly, focus more on the praises brought before God parallel to the praises mentioned in Hebrews 13:15.⁸⁶ It is not, however, until D.L. Balch’s interpretation in Appendix II in his monograph of 1981 on the domestic code in 1 Peter⁸⁷ that I have seen any serious questioning of the horizontal, human-wards directed understanding of ἐξαγγείλῃτε.

According to Balch, the verb ἐξαγγέλλω should not be understood so much as denoting public praises as praises in worship to God. He argues that “In contexts where ἐξαγγέλλω refers to “proclaiming” the praises, deeds, righteousness, or works of God, the proclaiming is always *to God* in worship.”⁸⁸ Hence it is more natural to understand the phrase as denoting praise of God in worship, not public, missionary preaching and kerygmatic proclamation. In fact, according to Balch, there is no reference in the letter to the “task” of all Christians doing missionary preaching. In this latter statement, Balch is followed by Ramsey Michaels.⁸⁹

Notes, 131: “The thought is certainly of preaching, not of the testimony borne silently by life and conduct.”; cf. Goppelt, L., *Der Erste Petrusbrief*, 153f; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 103.

⁸³ E.g., Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and of St. Jude*, 134; “. . . that ye may proclaim . . .”; Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 99; Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter. The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, 131; Elliott, *The Elect*, 41.

⁸⁴ Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 100.

⁸⁵ E.g., Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 92.

⁸⁶ Cf. Coppens, “Le Sacerdoce royal des fidèles: un Commentaire de I Peter, II, 4–10,” 71: “On peut le traduire “annoncer”, “proclamer”, ou “louer”, célébrer”. Si l’on tient compte de l’abondant usage du verbe dans la version grecque du psautier, la version “doner, célébrer” paraît devoir l’emporter. Elle rapproche notre texte d’Hebr., XIII, 15.”

⁸⁷ Balch, D.L., *Let Wives be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*, 132–36.

⁸⁸ Balch, D.L., *Let Wives be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*, 133.

⁸⁹ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 110: “Whether directed to God or to the worshipping

We might at last reflect a little over how our Philonic reader would understand the expressions in 2:5 and 2:9.

The understanding may here also hinge on the understanding of the terms πνευματικός and ἐξαγγείλητε. Philo uses the term πνευματικός six times; none of these should be directly related to the spirit of God, and only one denotes what may be translated as spiritual or immaterial in opposition to material.⁹⁰ Our Philonic reader would not easily understand πνευματικὰς θυσίας as these two terms are never combined in Philo's works. θυσίας in Philo's works are the material sacrifices of the temple, but there are several sayings that deal with the sacrifices as something carried out in the soul, in the "microcosmos."⁹¹ More interesting, perhaps, is Philo's pinpointing of the sacrificers bringing themselves; "in bringing themselves they offer the best of sacrifices" (Spec. 1,271–72), and this sacrificing is associated with hymns and praise (cf. Rom 12:1; Hebr 13:15).

Finally, with regard to the expression ἐξαγγείλητε, Philo uses ἐξαγγέλλω only twice (Plant. 128; Migr. 73), and his use would, in fact, support Balch's allegation.⁹² And read in light of, for instance, Spec. 1,271 where sacrifices and praise are associated, our Philonic reader, we suggest, would be more on the side of Balch than that of the others. In addition, though Philonic readers would be positive towards proselytes, they would know nothing about missionary preaching in order to win converts and proselytes. Hence they would most probably have opted for the Godward-directed understanding of the role of the "common priesthood".

community, the "proclamation" involved in the verb ἐξαγγέλλειν belongs in the category of worship, not missionary activity." So also Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 157–60.

⁹⁰ Cf. Opif 67; Heres 242; Praem. 48; Aeter 86.125. The one to be understood as "spiritual" or "immaterial" is Abr. 113 where it is said that Sarah saw the strangers as prophets and angels... "transformed from their spiritual and soullike nature into human shape (μεταβαλόντων ἀπὸ πνευματικῆς καιψυχουειδοῦς οὐσίας εἰς ἀνθρωπόμορφον ἰδέαν). As to the meaning of πνεῦμα in Philo, see *TDNT* VI, article on πνεῦμα, πνευματικός, esp. pp. 372–275 (Bieder).

⁹¹ Cf. esp. Wenschkewitz, *Die Spiritualisierung*, 85.

⁹² Cf. also Michaels, *1 Peter*, 110.

Conclusions

What does all this tell us? We have investigated the works of two very different authors, 1 Peter and Philo, and tried to establish how a reader well versed in the latter would possibly read the other. The common item focused here has been the so-called “common priesthood”. Though 1 Peter and Philo have many ideological issues in common, their symbolic universes have different centres: Philo’s lies in the particularistic Jewish nation as the priesthood of the world, bound together by their observance of the Torah and their worship in the Jerusalem Temple as well as in that at home at Passover and worship of the soul. And 1 Peter, distanced from the Jerusalem cult by geography, but associated with Israel by way of terms and concepts, has as its centre its understanding of Jesus as the Messiah and the new community consisting of both Jews and Gentiles. Could they possibly understand each other?

This question has not, however, been our main focus here. I have first asked: How did Philo perceive the phenomenon of “common priesthood”? Then I focused on 1 Peter 2:5 & 9, asking, how would a reader well versed in the works of Philo understand the relevant statements of 1 Peter?

Investigating the works of Philo, I sketched his view of the Temple, the High Priest and the priesthood of Israel. He has a conception of Israel as the priesthood of the world, but also of a “common priesthood” focused on the people as priest when they celebrate the Passover. These priesthoods are, however, not directed toward men, but toward God on behalf of the whole human race. Their role is intercessory and sacrificial, not missionary.

In 1 Peter 2:5 & 9 there are a lot of difficult problems of interpretation to take into account. Sketching these, I also asked how a Philonic reader would view these issues. Arguing from the symbolic universe represented by the works of Philo, I suggested that our Philonic reader would understand the “common priesthood” of 1 Peter as something that was given, not something that was to strive after (cf. οἰκοδομεῖσθε); that the βασιλείον ιεράτευμα would be understood in

light of the οἶκος and the sacrificial terms in its context as denoting “temple” rather than “household”; and that the role of the priesthood would be directed towards God, not people. Hence, coming from the world of Philo, even the expression ἐξαγγείλητε could be understood as praise to God rather than missionary preaching to people.

This is not to say that reading the works of Philo solves all the crucial issues of interpretation inherent in 1 Peter 2:5 & 9, but it at least provides an interesting ideological scenario for such efforts of interpretation.

It is an important fact that one may talk about a “common priesthood” or perhaps better: a “priesthood of the faithful” in both Philo and 1 Peter. But this fact has, regrettably, most often been overlooked in studies of 1 Peter. Both Philo and 1 Peter belong to the Diaspora, but ideologically they are different. But they have one great thing in common: the writings of the Torah. Hence, in a way the basis of their ideology is the same, but their expositions differ due to different keys of interpretation. To see where their interpretations differ and where they do not, and why, is the task of hermeneutics.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MODERATE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN PAROIKOI: A PHILONIC READING OF 1 PETER 2:11

In the preceding chapter we had a closer look at 1 Peter 2:5 + 9 from a Philonic perspective. Now we turn to 2:11. This verse has been called “the most strongly Hellenised ψυχή passage in the NT.”¹ In the following, however, I will not deal much with the possible or even plausible ‘religionsgeschichtlichen’ background of the passage, or ask from where or from whom Philo might have got his ideas. I will limit my scope of view to how a Philonic reading might interpret the passage, and especially the anthropological part of it (11b):

Ἀγαπητοί, παρακαλῶ ὡς παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν αἵτινες στρατεύονται κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς· (1 Peter 2:11).

We will probably never know how the historical Philo of Alexandria would have read the encouragement of 1 Peter 2:11. What we may ask for, however, is this: How would a Philonic reader interpret it? That is: How would a person well versed in the works of Philo understand the issues contained in 1 Peter 2:11? We might call this person Philo, but I will rather try to imagine such a reader who is so well versed in Philo’s works that he or she would know the symbolic universe laid out in Philo’s works just as well as himself. Considering the issue that Philo possibly taught in a kind of school setting,² he might have had students well versed in the symbolic universe represented by his works. Hence my focus is how would

¹ See TDNT 9:653 (E. Schweizer).

² Cf. here the interesting view set forth by G.E. Sterling, “The School of the Sacred Laws: The Social Setting of Philo’s Treatises,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 53 (1999): 148–64.

possibly Philo, or a Philonic reader of the first century CE interpret the issues inherent in 1 Peter 2:11?³

The present chapter has two parts: First, I investigate the Philonic understanding of the items relevant here, i.e., the *πάροικος*, the *ψυχή* and *ἐπιθυμία* in its relation to *σάρξ*. Then secondly, I apply my findings in reading 1 Peter 2:11.

Reading the Works of Philo

Philo was a Jew, but the ‘kind’ or ‘degree’ of his Jewishness has been intensively debated, and variously evaluated.⁴ His writings demonstrate a fairly good knowledge of the Greco-Roman culture, not least of the various philosophers and their ideas. The Jewish scholar S. Sandmel says that “in Philo, the Greek philosophical tradition <was> absorbed to the maximum; on the other hand, Philo was as loyal to Judaism as any personality in the age with which we deal, and, indeed as any personality in subsequent times.”⁵ While deeply influenced by the philosophies of his days, Philo nevertheless remained a Jew, and was an expositor of the Jewish Scriptures, the Hebrew Bible, especially the Pentateuch.⁶ The narratives of the books of Moses are foundational to Philo in both his expositions and ethical exhortations as well as when he deals with contemporary political problems in Alexandria (cf. Flaccum; Legatio). In dealing with how Philo or a Philonic reader would understand 1 Peter 2:11, we will find these two influences demonstrated. In the following we will also

³ I am not at all suggesting that the Letter of 1 Peter can possibly be dated to the time of Philo; on the other hand, I am not convinced that it should be dated very late in the first century CE.

⁴ Borgen, “Philo of Alexandria A Critical and Synthetical Survey of Research Since World War II.”

⁵ S. Sandmel, *Judaism and Christian Beginnings* (Oxford, 1978), 280.

⁶ This has been especially emphasized in recent years by P. Borgen, and have found wide approval; see Peder Borgen, “Philo of Alexandria: Reviewing and Rewriting Biblical Material,” *Studia Philonica* 9 (1997): 37–53; Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria, An Exegete for His Time*.

see that there are especially two stories from the Hebrew scriptures that are important to Philo's expositions of the issues related to 1 Peter 2:11; that is the story of creation and the story of Abraham as the paradigm for the wise man. Hence the works of *De Opificio*, *Leg All.*, *De Abrahamo*, and *On the Migratione Abraham* are especially relevant, but also several of the other works because Philo often returns to these foundational stories.

The Two Terms πάροικος and παρεπίδημος in the Works of Philo

In the works preserved from this Jewish philosopher and theologian of Alexandria, we find that the noun πάροικος and the other forms of its root are used 37 times.⁷ Παρεπίδημος is used only once (Conf. 79 = Gen 23:4). When considering how Philo applies these terms in his interpretations of the Hebrew Scriptures, we are soon involved in the particular 'ideology' of Philo, especially his narrative expositions of the wise man, which exhibits both Stoic and Platonic influences. Philo's expositions in his so-called allegorical commentaries are primarily symbolic or allegorical; in the *Expositio* however, he deals more directly with the concrete stranger and proselyte of the Jewish communities, and their social world. These aspects should not, however, be set in opposition to each other, but rather be viewed as complementary.

In Her. 266–267 he fleshes out his view that the essence of man, the soul, is not from below, but from God. Hence in relation to each other, all human beings enjoy equal honor and equal rights, but to God they are aliens and sojourners (ἐπηλύτων καὶ παροίκων). The wise man shall not consider his body as his true home. Philo here refers to Gen 15:13 where Abraham is told that his offspring shall live as strangers among men.

The strangeness and alienship of the wise is further developed by Philo in his narrative descriptions of the wise man's relation to

⁷ Bitter, *Vreemdelingschap Bij Philo*, 31–32; Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*, 60–72; Torrey Seland, "πάροικος καὶ παρεπίδημος: Proselyte Characterizations in 1 Peter?" *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 11.2 (2001): 252–55. Cf. Chapter Two above.

the elementary studies, the ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία (Leg. 3,244; Congr. 22ff; Sacr. 43f). These studies are not to be considered as the most important; the wise man has to estrange himself from them, and proceed to the higher wisdom, i.e., the study of the Law of Moses.

The narratives of Abraham as a stranger are also used to describe the wise man's relation to the present world (Conf. 79ff). Abraham said he was a resident alien and a stranger (πάροικος καὶ παρεπίδημος; Gen 23:4), and so was Jacob (Gen 47:4; Conf. 80), and Moses (Exod 2:22; Conf. 81). One of the more remarkable aspects of Philo's conception of the proselytes as a kind of strangers is his expositions of the stories of Abraham's wanderings as a model and prototype for proselytes. This aspect indeed also reveals the conceptual closeness of strangers and proselytes in the mind of Philo. While Abraham in the Hebrew Bible is described as a גֵּר תוֹשָׁב (ger toschab; Gen 23:4, cf. 15:13 on his descendants as גֵּר), an expression the LXX renders as πάροικος καὶ παρεπίδημος (cp. Conf. 79, cf. 15:13: πάροικον), Philo, however, describes Abraham as a model for proselytes.⁸

The main function, however, of these stories in the works of Philo seem to be their role as characterizing narratives of 'the wise man.' Philo is creating new stories for his readers to emulate. We shall have to return to this issue below.

The 'Soul' in the Works of Philo

The soul of man is the higher part of his being, the one most nearly akin to heaven, and the purest thing (Decal. 134): "The duality of body and soul is one of the cornerstones of Philo's thought."⁹ Hence Philo's anthropology is clearly dualistic. The soul is also an important aspect in the humans as it represents an important part in being

⁸ On Abraham as model for proselytes, see also Chapter Two above, originally published as Seland, "πάροικος καὶ παρεπίδημος," 254–55.

⁹ David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, Philosophia Antiqua XLIV (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 262.

created in the image of God (Det. 68; Leg. 1,38, cf. Gen 1:27).

According to Philo, furthermore, the soul of man is surely pre-existent. It has a story, a history. It comes from God, the creator, and originates from nothing created whatsoever. When man was created, it was as “a sacred dwelling place or shrine for the reasonable soul, which man was to carry as a holy image, of all images the most Godlike” (Opif. 137, cf. Det 68; Leg. 1,38; Virt. 202; Praem. 120).¹⁰ The soul is not at home in its human body, it is as in a foreign country; it is only to sojourn there (Her. 267; Conf. 77–78). Hence, when the body dies, the soul departs, returning to its father (Gig. 3.13; QG 3,11). Philo lets Abraham say thus in his sorrow over his wife Sara; “. . . death is not the extinction of the soul, but its separation and detachment from the body and its return to the place where it came”, i.e. from God (Abr. 258); and on the death of Moses Philo says that “the time came when he had to make his pilgrimage from earth to heaven, and leave this mortal life for immortality, summoned thither by the Father who resolved his twofold nature of soul and body into a single unit, transforming his whole being into mind, pure as the sunlight” (Mos. 2,288, cf. Virt. 76). At death the soul is set free from the bonds of the flesh (Virt. 78), released from the vessels of body (Migr. 197), entering the truly holy place (Migr. 104), seeing the existent One (Migr. 170). This process of releasing the soul from the body is, in a way, to begin in this life, while still being in the body; it is carried out in mastering the bodily impulses, in loosening the ties to the impulses of the body, in overcoming the bodily impulses, and thus be able to see the bright light; the goal is the vision of God. We return to this issue below.

¹⁰ D.T. Runia has fully demonstrated how much Philo’s conception of the creation of the soul was rooted in Plato’s *Timaeus*. See Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*.

The Division of the Soul

The soul can also, according to Philo, be divided into several parts. One division is two-partite: The soul is spoken of as having two parts; the rational and the irrational. In Her. 55 Philo says that “We use ‘soul’ in two senses, both for the whole soul and also for its dominant part, which properly speaking is the soul’s soul. . . . And therefore the lawgiver held that the substance of the soul is twofold, blood being that of the soul as whole, and the divine breath or spirit that of its most dominant part.” On the basis of Lev 17:11.14, Philo speaks of blood as being the essence of the soul (Spec. 4,122), a soul similar to that also found in the animals (Her. 61). This part is “devoid of reason and steeped in blood, aflame with seething passions and burning lusts” (Her. 64). The important part, however, is the rational part, the rational soul.

Philo also has a tripartite division of the soul: “Our soul, we are told, is tripartite, having one part assigned to the mind and reason, one to the spirited element and one to the appetites” (τριμεροῦς ἡμῶν τῆς ψυχῆς ὑπαρχούσης τὸ μὲν νοῦς καὶ λόγος, τὸ δὲ θυμός, τὸ δὲ ἐπιθυμία κεκληρῶσθαι λέγεται; Conf. 21; Her. 132; Leg. 1,63–73; QG 1,13). Furthermore, the irrational soul may be divided into seven parts, namely the five senses, the faculty of speech, and last that of generation (Opif. 117; Her. 225).¹¹ But the soul may not only be divided into three with regard to its function, but also in regard to location in the body (Leg. 1,63–73; 3,114–160; Spec. 1,146.148; 3,92–94; Migr. 66–67; QE 2,100). The reasoning part is in the head, the spirited part is assigned to the breast, and more important for our focus here; the lustful part, the passions, are located to “the quarter about the abdomen and the belly, for there it is that lust, irrational cravings, has its abode” (Leg. 1,115). Philo also often calls this location “the belly and the organs below” (Agr. 38; Mos. 2,23; Gig. 18).¹²

¹¹ Such descriptions are wellknown also from several other Greek philosophers. See here Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, 301–18.

¹² See on this also Karl Olav Sandnes, *Belly and Body in the Pauline Epistles*,

There are also other ways of dividing the soul into several parts to be found in the works of Philo. Scholars seem, however, to consider the two-fold division as the most central to Philo's thought.¹³ The soul is essentially consisting of an indivisible rational part, and a divisional irrational part (Her. 167.232; Congr. 26; QE 2,33). The rational part is immortal, the irrational part is mortal.¹⁴ The irrational part is the location of the passions, which fight against the reasoning part. We often find warfare language used by Philo in his descriptions of the opposition and fights between reason and passion; "reason is at war with passion" (Leg. 3,116).¹⁵ The real conflict in man is thus between the rational and irrational parts of the soul. However, human beings as we are, tied to the body, have to comply with the bodily requirements. The danger involved in this situation, is to be overcome by means of the virtues.¹⁶ When reason takes the lead, the virtues grow, and the passions are subdued. But this is hard work for men; it has to be learned in several ways, and the fight is different for the various stages of men's' life. But without it, the soul will not be able to see the One who really is, the One and only God. In presenting these narrative expositions of the nature of the soul, Philo also creates new stories for the self-understanding of his readers; stories of migration.

The Immigration of the Soul

The nature of the soul, its distinction and immigration from the body become in Philo a narrative paradigm that is used in several contexts. Read together they illustrate both characteristics of the role of Israel

Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 120 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 108–32.

¹³ Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, 305–05.

¹⁴ See further on this in H.A. Wolfson, *Philo. Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam 1* (Cambridge, Ma, 1948), 389–413.

¹⁵ "Warfare is the most suitable metaphor for this mighty conflict in man's soul." Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, 263.

¹⁶ H.A. Wolfson, *Philo. Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam 2* (Cambridge, Ma, 1948), 225–37.

in the world, the nature of the soul, and not at least of Abraham as the true sage, the true wise man among men as a model for all others.

Israel, the soul of the world—so the narrative goes—was once captive in Egypt, the latter symbolising the body (Conf. 128; Migr 14.151). Accordingly Egypt is in many texts the symbol of the body, and thus the symbol of the earth-bound. But Israel is not earth-like, but soul-like. What the heaven is in the universe, Israel is in the world; and what the heaven is in the universe, the soul is in the body; and what the soul is in the body, the wise man is in the world. “For indeed the wise man (here Abraham) is the first of human race, as a pilot in a ship or a ruler in a city or a general in war, or again as a soul in a body and a mind in a soul, or once more heaven in the world or God in heaven” (Abr. 272). Hence Borgen summarizes this thus: “The Egyptians and their way of life are the evil body of passions, and those who worship the real God, the Jews, belong to the realm of the soul. Thus the terms applying to individuals, such as soul, reason, body etc, acquire collective connotations with Philo.”¹⁷ In this way Philo argues both the central role of Israel in the world, and of the soul in the body, and creates new stories for both.

Furthermore, the immigration of Abram was not only an immigration of body, but also one of soul (Abr. 66). The literal exposition of Abram’s departure from Haran is applied to the man, the allegorical to the soul (Abr. 88; 217; 236).¹⁸ This is extensively dealt with in Philo’s descriptions of Abram’s immigration both in his treatise *On the migration of Abraham* and *On Abraham*.

The story of the immigration of Abraham is here interpreted by

¹⁷ Peder Borgen, “Philo of Alexandria,” in *CRINT II*, 2, 271; Peder Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo*, reprint, 1965, Supplements to Novum Testamentum (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 134–36.

¹⁸ For a comprehensive summary of the figure of Abram in Philo, see Samuel Sandmel, *Philo’s Place in Judaism: A Study of Conceptions of Abraham in Jewish Literature* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1971).

Philo as concerning the fight against the passions, and the way to rule over them; to be a master, not a slave. In Abr. 68–84 Philo has a comparable exposition. The migrations of Abram can be interpreted on two levels: According to the literal, the travels are made by a man of wisdom, “but according to the laws of allegory by a virtue-loving soul in its search for the true God” (Abr. 68). Or as Sandmel states it:¹⁹ “The literal Abraham can be described as the record of Abraham’s ‘body’; the allegorical Abraham is Philo’s account of the progress and destiny of Abraham’s soul.” But one should not set a too sharp division between these two expositions of Philo.²⁰

In Her. 293–299 Philo deals with the expression “but in the fourth generation they shall come back hither” of Gen 15:16. This he interprets as “not only to state the date at which they should inhabit the holy land, but to bring before us the thought of the complete restoration of the soul” (293). Then he gives an exposition of the four stages of life human beings go through.

In this story Philo sets forth his view of the development of life of human beings, distinguishing four different stages from the early youth to high age.²¹ Important in his presentation is the role played by education and the role of philosophy in education. As Judaism is the highest philosophy to Philo, it also demonstrates the prerogatives of those reared in Judaism. Philo may here seem to be heavily influenced by philosophies in vogue at his time as he draws extensively on Plato and e.g., the Stoics. Their views are, however, congenial to his own thought. In fact, according to Philo, the philosophers have learned their doctrines from Moses. Hence when Philo is

¹⁹ Sandmel, Samuel, *Philo’s Place in Judaism*, 97.

²⁰ Sandmel states that, if we read the presentation in De Abrahamo alone, one may inadvertently distort Philo’s intent. Sandmel, Samuel, *Philo’s Place in Judaism*, 189.

²¹ There are several other presentations and expositions of the ages of man in the works of Philo. See further on this in Jean Laporte, “The Ages of Life in Philo of Alexandria,” in *SBL Seminar Papers Annual Meeting 1986* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1986), 278–90, and A Mendelson, *Secular Education in Philo of Alexandria* (Cincinnati, 1982), 40–42.

interpreting the Law by the help of philosophy, he is only fleshing out what is there already in the teachings of Moses, that is in Judaism.

This is seen even more clearly if we now return to the figure of Abram, and the narrative of his progression. For Abram too goes through several stages to perfection of soul. The first stage is the stage of the body. This is symbolized by Abram's stay in Chaldea. The second stage is characterized by sense perception. By using his senses, Abram was able to make inferences that lead him to a lower knowledge, and then ultimately to a higher knowledge. The lower knowledge lies in the curriculum of the lower schools, symbolized by Hagar and realized through the encyclica.²² The third stage is 'reason'. Reason is the instrumentality by which Abram conquers his senses and passion. It is the stage of the mind. Here Abram's name is changed into Abraham, and as Abraham gets to know God, Abraham becomes himself 'a living law' as the Law was not yet given on Sinai. Then Abraham becomes a speculative philosopher, he passes beyond the encyclica. Finally, Abraham is perfected by occupying himself with the intelligible world, he is becoming a philosopher king, he is becoming a 'sage'. Abraham now travels the road of virtue, he is able to have an apprehension of the wisdom of God, he is a prophet and a 'friend of God', and as the climax he is able to have a contemplative sight of God, the One who really Is.²³

Hence there are stages to pass to be able to fight the impulses of the body, to survive the bodily passions, and enhancing the life of the soul while still being in the body. Accordingly, there are strong ascetic tendencies in the ethic of Philo.²⁴ Let us then have a closer look at 1 Peter 2:11 in light of Philo's writings.

²² In Congr. 22–24; Sacr. 43–44 and Leg. 3,244 is Hagar interpreted as 'sojourning,' and Sarah is 'virtue'.

²³ This is only a brief sketch of the view of Philo; for a fuller presentation see Sandmel, Samuel, *Philo's Place in Judaism*, 141–85.

²⁴ See further on this David Winston, "Philo's Ethical Theory," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt II.21.1*, edited by W. Haase (Berlin, 1984), 372–416, especially pp. 405–414.

ψυχή and ἐπιθυμία in the Writings of Philo

One can perhaps say that, in their respective view of ψυχή, the difference between the anthropology of the Hebrew Bible, and the Greek/Hellenistic philosophies becomes most evident. In the Hebrew Bible, a human being does not *have* a soul; s/he *is* a soul. The view of men as being a composition of body and soul, or of body-soul-spirit is not to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures as such. These thoughts are, however, present in some later Jewish works, due to Hellenistic influences.²⁵ To the Hebrew mind accordingly, the soul is not something dwelling within one's body; the term 'soul' is a way of considering and describing oneself; one does not *have*, one *is* a soul. Hence soul here becomes a concept for the person itself, the personality of men, the self, the whole person. The soul cannot be distinguished from the person, it has no pre-existence, nor is it a part that will survive the body.²⁶

In much Greek thought, however, the structures are different.²⁷ What is often called the Greek view, is a conception of the soul as something pre-existent that enters the body at birth and leaves it at death; it may be viewed as a divine spark in men that for a period lives in the body as in a prison, but then is released at the

²⁵ See here e.g., H.D. Preuss, *Theologie des Alten Testaments Band 2: Israels Weg mit JHWH* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992), 117–18. P. Borgen (Peder Borgen, "Heavenly Ascent in Philo: An Examination of Selected Passages," in *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation*, eds. James H. Charlesworth and Craig A. Evans, Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993], 252–53; Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria, An Exegete for His Time*, 236–37) emphasizes that the issue that the soul is connected with heaven and the body with earth is found in rabbinic and apocalyptic sources too, and that even the thought that the soul has a pre-existence before it enters the body had penetrated Jewish anthropology.

²⁶ To many, if not most, scholars, this is the dominant view of the issue in the New Testament texts, see e.g. Bo Reicke, "Body and Soul in the New Testament," *Studia Theologica* 19 (1965): 100–212.

²⁷ On the view of Philo and Plato, see Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*. On the view of Stoics, compared especially to Plato, see A.A. Long, "Soul and Bodies in Stoicism," in *Stoic Studies*, by A.A. Long (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 224–49.

death of the body. Such a view had enormous consequences for how they considered the body, the soul, life and death.

How is the soul considered in the writings of Philo? He may speak about the soul as the inner core of man, the center of feelings, ideas, planning, learning etc; much of this is compatible with the Hebrew view. But he does also describe the soul as pre-existent, as something that dwells in the body like in a prison (Leg. 1,108; Somn. 1,139; QG 2,69), quite in terms and concepts of the Greek world. Hence Philo is also squarely on the side of the Greek view. We shall elaborate a little more below on this part of the Philonic ‘psychology’ below.

A Philonic Reading of 1 Peter 2:11

Performing an inner-textual reading of 1 Peter, we see that the characterizations of *πάροικος* and *παρεπίδημος* occur at several important places: As a description of the readers in the introductory section (1:1), living in the Diaspora; in 1,17 in an exhortation to live in ‘fear’ of God in their temporary time as resident aliens (*τὸν τῆς παροικίας ὑμῶν*), and then finally in 2:11, in ‘our’ exhortation. We note also that no other New Testament writing uses these terms as often as 1 Peter, and that they are found in connection with exhortations in Philo too. We note that *ψυχή* too seems to be a favorite term of Philo as well as of 1 Peter (1:9.22; 2:11.25; 4:19). *Ἐπιθυμία* is used in 1 Peter 1:14;2:11; 4:2–3, the latter obviously giving a further specification of what it meant to the author as he juxtaposes it with several other terms: *ἐν ἀσελγείαις, ἐπιθυμίαις, οἰνοφλυγίαις, κώμοις, πότοις καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίαις*. How would a Philonic reader ‘read’ 1 Peter 2:11? In addition to the aspects mentioned above, we have several other passages in Philo to draw upon to get a better understanding of this question.

Ἀγαπητοί, παρακαλῶ ὥς . . .

This introduction to the exhortation of 2:11 is very familiar to New Testament readers. “The conjunction of παρακαλῶ or παρακαλοῦμεν with ἀδελφοί is a common stylistic device in NT epistles marking a division in thought or a fresh start in the argument (e.g., Rom 12:1; 15:30; 16:17; 1 Cor 1:10; 1 Thess 4:1, 10b; 5:14; cf. Heb 13:22). The same function can be assigned here to ἀγαπητοί, παρακαλῶ (see 4:12 and 5:1).”²⁸

A Philonic reader would, however—from his or her reading in Philo’s works—not be familiar with these introductory phrases (Ἀγαπητοί, παρακαλῶ ὥς . . . compare 4:12, but see also 1:13.22) as these are typical for the more direct exhortations, and Philo does not often address his readers in this way, if at all.²⁹ There are, however, several exhortations in the writings of Philo, and he has a rich vocabulary in expressing these issues.³⁰ In fact, to Philo the Law consists of commands, prohibitions and exhortations. Philo at times uses παραίνεσις (exhortation) as a term designating one of the Ten Commandments (Dec. 82.100), but it more often refers to Deuteronomy as a whole, or to sayings of Moses recorded in the Deuteronomy (Spec. 4.131, Agr. 84.172). This is quite natural as the most of Deuteronomy is composed as a long speech. Hence a Philonic reader would be familiar with comparable exhortations, but not the direct form of 1 Peter 2:11.

²⁸ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 115.

²⁹ Carl J. Bjerkelund, *Parakalo. Form, Funktion und Sinn der parakalo-Sätze in den paulinischen Briefen* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1967), 97–98.

³⁰ Troels Engberg-Pedersen, “Paranesis Terminology in Philo,” in *Neotestamentica et Philonica. Studies in Honor of Peder Borgen*, eds. David E. Aune, Torrey Seland, and Jarl Henning Ulrichsen (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2002), 371–92.

παροίκους καὶ παρεπίδημους

The words πάροικος and παρεπίδημος are pivotal terms in 1 Peter's characterizations of its addressees, but there are various interpretations in vogue of what they denote, and what kind of people they characterize. Of the many interpretations of the particular expressions of 1:1.17; 2:11 (πάροικος, παροικία, and παρεπίδημος), most of them can be characterized as either social and non-metaphorical or metaphorical. There are, of course, also several interpretations that try to combine these two aspects.

W.C. van Unnik treats them as denoting the people from whom the converts were drawn as God-fearers and proselytes. These former pagans were exiles in a double sense; on the earth as πάροικοι and as παρεπίδημοι in the synagogue. According to van Unnik, the narratives of Acts about the mission of Paul confirm such an interpretation.³¹

The New Testament scholar who in recent years has been the most formative and representative person for the view that the terms πάροικος and παρεπίδημος are not to be read as metaphors but as social descriptions is undoubtedly John H. Elliott,³² and he is followed by several other in his emphasis on the social estrangement inherent in the terms.³³

He finds that the terms denote displaced persons who are currently aliens permanently residing in, or strangers temporarily visiting the provinces; the meaning of πάροικος he finds to be 'stranger' or 'resident alien', the meaning of παρεπίδημος is 'visiting stranger.' As such they might well represent terms that were applied to persons who were differentiated from the natives in respect to their

³¹ Unnik, W.C. van, "The Redemption in 1 Peter I 18–19 and the Problem of the First Epistle of Peter."; Unnik, W.C. van, "Christianity According to 1 Peter."

³² Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*; Elliott, "1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy: A Discussion with David Balch."; Elliott, *What is Social Science Criticism?* 70–86; Elliott, *1 Peter*.

³³ As for instance Achtemeier, *1 Peter* and McKnight, *1 Peter. The NIV Application Commentary*.

land of origin, ethnic or familial roots, and even their different views and opinions, language, property and religion. He admits, however, that the terms should not be read as social terms only; the words are used to describe religious as well as social circumstances.³⁴

The most prevalent and influential interpretation of these terms, and perhaps the oldest one too, has been to read them as expressions of a pilgrimage theology: The Christians are pilgrims on earth, they do not have their real home here, but are on their way to their heavenly home.³⁵ Troy W. Martin argues strongly for a metaphorical understanding of these terms. He states that “there are many indications in 1 Peter that the recipients were not literally strangers or aliens. Since they are obviously Gentiles, the only way to understand the phrase strangers of the dispersion in 1:1 is metaphorically.”³⁶

Some scholars arguing for a metaphorical interpretation also admit social implications of the meaning of these terms.³⁷ R. Feldmeier, one of the most recent commentator on these issues, finds the experiences of the *people of Israel* as the primary conceptual and social background for the view of the Christian’s estrangement in 1 Peter. Furthermore, he suggests that the presentation of the estrangement (German: *Fremdlandschaft*) of the Petrine Christians has several roots; the author uses OT traditions, an usage that is also influenced by the use of these traditions in contemporary Judaism, especially Hellenistic Judaism; and in addition, the view set forth in 1 Peter is also marked by an eschatological sharpening, an influence which derives “aus dem Gesamtzusammenhang der urchristlichen Verkündigung.”³⁸ The Christians’ estrangement is not derived as much from

³⁴ See especially Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 42.

³⁵ Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter. The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, 135; Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 41.72.103; Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 46–47; Brun, *Förste Peters Brev*, 22,63,91.

³⁶ Martin, Troy W., *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 142.

³⁷ See here e.g., Knoch, *Der Erste und Zweite Petrusbrief. Der Judasbrief*.

³⁸ Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*, 103.

their relations to the world as they are estranged to nonbelievers because of their relationship to God and their membership in the Christian community.³⁹ I, for my part, have suggested that the terms function as metaphors drawn from the social world of proselytes, characterizing the social situation of the petrine Christians, especially throwing light on the social estrangement of the converts as Christians in a hostile world.⁴⁰

Our brief review has demonstrated that the views concerning the meaning and connotations of the terms *πάροικος* and *παρεπίδημος* can be seen as exhibiting a preference for either a theological (that is, a metaphorical), or a social reading. Some scholars want to argue a closer characterization of the readers in light of these terms, as e.g., van Unnik and McKnight who propose that the recipients had really been proselytes or God-fearers, while others are more indecisive concerning their exact background.

The characterizations of the readers in 2:11, however, would be familiar to a philonic reader, and s/he would probably have had certain suggestions in mind as to its focus since the reading of 1:3.17. These descriptions are very important to the author of 1 Peter; his readers, as the beloved and chosen people of God (1:1;2:9–0), are in some respect *παροίκους καὶ παρεπίδημους*. But how would Philo or a Philonic reader understand these characterizations; does Philo use them as descriptions of the people of God, that is of the Jews; and what denotations and connotations do they have in his works?

In the works preserved from Philo, we find that both the noun *πάροικος* and the verbal forms are used 16 times respectively; the derived form *παροίκησις* is used 3 times (Leg. 3,244; Sacr. 43; Congr. 20), and *παροικία* and *παροικίζω* are used one time each (Conf. 79; Spec. 4,93). *Παρεπίδημος* is used only once, that is in Conf. 79, which is a quotation from Gen 23:4 (Abraham), a passage that probably

³⁹ See on this view also H. Giesen, “Lebenszeugnis in der Fremde. Zum Verhalten der Christen in der paganen Gesellschaft (1 Peter 2.11–17),” *Studien zum Neuen testament und seiner Umwelt* 23 (1998): 113–52.

⁴⁰ Seland, “*πάροικος καὶ παρεπίδημος*.” Cf. Chapter Two in this volume.

is in the backbone of 1 Peter 2:11 too. The verb is used in Agr. 65, cf. Conf. 76.⁴¹ Furthermore, when investigating his use in more detail, we find that Philo primarily uses these terms as descriptions of the wise man, that is, especially of Abraham as the prototype of a man of God. But in this way it also becomes a characterization of those who have found the road of the Light, the road to the vision of God, i.e. those who have realized the role of Judaism and the Law as the vehicles of God in their life towards the true goal of humanity. As terms signifying this pattern, they are used in the narratives of Abraham as the one who travelled from Haran to Canaan (Conf. 79; Virt. 212; 216); he is thus “the standard of nobility for all proselytes, who, abandoning the ignobility of strange laws and monstrous customs . . . have come to settle in a better land, in a commonwealth full of true life and vitality, with truth as its director and president” (Virt. 219). He, like the later Tamar (Gen 38), became able to “glimpse a little ray of truth . . . <and> deserted to the camp of piety” (Virt. 221). In fact all wise persons are, according to Moses, in a position of a *παροίκος* to God: “all who Moses calls wise are represented as resident aliens” (Conf. 77). Both Abraham, Jacob, Isaac and Moses are thus described as ‘resident aliens’ or ‘sojourners’ (Conf. 79–82).

A Philonic reader would know that, according to Philo, the wise person is a ‘resident alien’ in three respects; with respect to God, with respect to his relations to the elementary studies (*ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία*), and with respect to life in this world.⁴²

As in the Hebrew Bible and in the LXX, humans are described as proselytes and strangers in relation to God (Lev 25:23f). In relation to each other all created beings rank as beings of longest descent and highest birth; they are to have equal honor and birth. “But to God they are aliens and sojourners (*ἐπηλύτων καὶ παροίκων*): “For

⁴¹ See further on these terms in Philo: Bitter, *Vreemdelingschap Bij Philo*, 31–32.

⁴² Bitter, *Vreemdelingschap Bij Philo*, 50–170; Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*, 60–69.

each of us has come into this city as into a foreign city, in which before our birth we had no part, and in this city he does but sojourn, until he has exhausted his appointed span of life” (Cher. 120). God alone is the true citizen, and all created beings are sojourners and aliens (cf. Cher. 108; Her. 267). In fact, the wise man, as is the focus here, shall not consider his body as his true home; only fools do that. The wise man, however, that is, the lover of virtue, is not granted by God to dwell in the body as his homeland, but only permitted to sojourn there as in a foreign country.

The second aspect of strangeness and alienship is exemplified by Philo in his descriptions of the wise man’s relation to the elementary studies, the ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία (Leg. 3:244; Congr. 22ff; Sacr. 43f). These studies are not to be considered as the most important; the wise man has to estrange himself from them, proceeding to the higher wisdom, that is the study of the Law of Moses. This view is developed in Philo’s descriptions of Abraham’s relations to Hagar, a description that also draws upon influences from other sources than the Hebrew Scriptures.⁴³ It is important to Philo that these studies should not be misused, that one does not stay with them, but proceeds.⁴⁴ The studies of ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία are not the goal, only means on the road: wise people should estrange themselves from them, proceeding to higher wisdom; that is the study of the Law of Moses (Leg. 3,244; Congr. 22ff; Sacr. 43–44). The lower education is symbolized by Hagar, the handmaid of Sarah (Congr. 11ff): “For he who contends himself with the secular learning only does but sojourn and is not domiciled with wisdom” (Sacr. 44). Hence he needs to proceed after a time of sojourning, to the higher wisdom, the Torah. There is a story to be lived.

The third aspect in the estrangement of humans, are in their relations to this world (Conf. 79ff; Her. 267). According to Conf.

⁴³ Peder Borgen, “Some Hebrew and Pagan Features in Philo’s and Paul’s Interpretation of Hagar and Ishmael,” in *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism*, eds Peder Borgen and Sören Giversen (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1995), 151–64.

⁴⁴ Mendelson, *Secular Education in Philo of Alexandria*.

77–78, all whom Moses calls wise are represented as sojourners (Conf. 77–78):

Their souls are never colonists leaving heaven for a new home. Their way is to visit earthly nature as men who travel abroad to see and learn. So when they have stayed awhile in their bodies, and beheld through them all that sense and mortality has to shew, they make their way back to the place from which they set out at first. To them the heavenly region, where their citizenship lies, is their native land; the earthly region in which they become sojourners is a foreign country. For surely, when men found a colony, the land which receives them becomes their native land instead of the mother city, but to the traveller abroad the land which sent him forth is still the mother to whom also he yearns to return.

The first and third of these aspects are not always clearly distinguished in the works of Philo, but as readers we might differentiate. There are clear Platonic and Stoic components in this view, but Philo appropriates these in his teachings on the value of Judaism as the light of God to the world. According to Feldmeier, Philo's use of these terms are probably also influenced by his experiences of belonging to a minority group in Alexandria.⁴⁵ We might see this illustrated in his descriptions of the wise in QG 4,74:⁴⁶

Does not every wise soul live like an immigrant and sojourner in this mortal body, having dwellingplace and country the most pure substance of heaven, . . . For truly the lover of wisdom does not dwell, or go about, with any vain or empty things, even though he has grown together with them, but is far removed from them in thought. Wherefore the wise man is truly and properly said not to sail, or journey, or be a fellowcitizen, or live, with the foolish man, since the sovereign and ruling mind does not unite, or mix, with anything else.

In sayings like this, we probably see Philo mirroring experiences of his hometown, coupled with his somewhat elitist view of the role of Israel in the world (cf. here especially Spec. 4,179–181).

⁴⁵ So especially Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*, 64–69.

⁴⁶ I owe this reference to Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*, 66.

We return to 1 Peter. What conceptions and ideas would probably be actualized when a Philonic reader read the descriptions in 1 Peter? S/he would be able to recognize the terms from Philo, and interpret them in light of the symbolic universe provided by his writings. Hence s/he would discover that they have a *function* in 1 Peter comparable to their role in Philo; that is as descriptions of the wise man/the people of God in contrast to the others. Furthermore, s/he would possibly understand these terms in 1 Peter as indicating the estrangement of the readers in this world. But would s/he understand the distinction between being strangers in the world and/or pilgrims in relation to the heavenly world? Probably yes, but with different connotations than those usually associated with Christian readings of 1 Peter. The difference would, I presume, mostly be due to different emphases in self-understanding (i.e., ecclesiology) and eschatology (1 Peter 1:3–5.13c; 4:13; 5:4). Asking such questions in light of the Philonic universe would probably not lead to clear answers. The Philonic reader would have to look for further clues. Could s/he find such clues in the rest of 1 Peter 2:11: ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν αἵτινες στρατεύονται κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς? How would s/he read these features in light of Philo?

ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν αἵτινες στρατεύονται κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς

The characterization of the readers in the first part of 2:11 has been more discussed in recent research on 1 Peter than the exhortation in the last part: ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν αἵτινες στρατεύονται κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς. The word ἐπιθυμία is found in 1 Peter 1:14; 2:11 and 4:2–3, always denoting aspects to be avoided;⁴⁷ Σαρκικός is only used here in 1 Peter; σάρξ is used 6 times (1 Peter 1:24; 3:18.24; 4:1.2.6), and ψυχή 5 times (1:9.22; 2:11.25; 4:19). The latter is not used in relation to σάρξ except in 2:11. The frequency of the ψυχή

⁴⁷ The verb is only to be found in 1:12, here in a more neutral way.

passages is relatively high, as the term is, e.g., found only 15 times in the letters attributed to Paul, while 5 times in 1 Peter:

In 1:9 the goal of the Christians' hope is described as σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν, in 1:22 the Christians are exhorted to Τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες, in 2:25 the readers are characterized as some who, having been astray now have turned "to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls" (ἐπιτὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν), in 4:19 the sufferers are to entrust their souls to God (παραιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν).

Most scholars read these usages of the term ψυχή thus:

Psyche occurs frequently in 1 Peter (1:22; 2:11.25; 3:20; 4,19) and elsewhere as a semiticism standing for a reflexive pronoun. Here, and in the Bible generally, it denotes not an entity within or distinguishable from the human body but human beings in their entity as living beings animated by the breath of God.⁴⁸

The 2:11 is never-theless somewhat different compared to the other references in this letter.⁴⁹ E. Schweizer has stated that it is the only NT passage where ψυχή plainly stands in antithesis to σὰρξ, and he describes it as "the most strongly Hellenised ψυχή passage in the NT."⁵⁰ Hence it may be interesting to have a fresh look at it from the perspective of a Philonic reader.

The passage contains several important terms and concepts; the more important issue is, however, the interrelations of the terms, i.e. the meaning of the sentence string ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν

⁴⁸ Cited from Elliott, *1 Peter*, 344. See also Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 158; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*; Goppelt, Leonhard, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 157. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 133; Hiebert, *First Peter: An Expository Commentary*, 71; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 50; P. Gerhard Dautzenberg, "Σωτηρία ψυχῶν (1 Peter 1,9)," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 8 (1964): 262–76; Giesen, "Lebenszeugnis in der Fremde. Zum Verhalten der Christen in der paganen Gesellschaft (1 Peter 2.11–17)," 124–25 Compare here also the statement of Michaels, *1 Peter* ad 1:9: "not the 'soul' in distinction from the body but rather a person's whole life or self-identity"; or ad 2:11: "a person's life in the sense indicated by Mark 8,35–37."

⁴⁹ This seems also to be admitted by Dautzenberg, "Σωτηρία ψυχῶν (1 Peter 1,9)," 275.

⁵⁰ See TDNT 9:653 (E. Schweizer).

αἵτινες στρατεύονται κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς. Hence we will focus on how Philo perceives the body, the passions of the body and its relations to the soul of human beings.

First of all; as a Jew Philo firmly upholds the view of God as the creator of mankind. Hence to Philo both the body and soul are created by God. The body is the house of the soul in its dwelling among mankind (Opif. 137), and the soul is the lodging of God in man (Cher. 98.101; Praem. 123). In his work *On the Creation* (Opif.; esp. 136–147), Philo gives a very positive evaluation of the human body; it even looks like he places more emphasis on it than on the excellence of soul and mind. According to Runia, this is probably determined by his exegetical context.⁵¹ It should be noted that this text is primarily about the very first man, Adam. After him, the humankind deteriorated in quality (cf. Virt. 203–205). Nevertheless, it is still related to him, and the life of Adam still “represent(s) an ideal that is to some degree at least attainable for human beings.”⁵²

Then secondly, in many passages in his works Philo spells out that the body is “at best, a necessary evil (Leg. 3,72–73, cf. Her. 272).”⁵³ It is like a corpse, a shell-like growth, a dwelling place of calamities, wicked by nature and a plotter against the soul (Leg. 3,69). But it is also the house of the soul in its dwelling in mankind. The passions of the body, however, plot against the soul, and the soul is burdened by its life in the human bodies. It is “entombed in the body as in a sepulcher” (Leg. 1,108).

Considering σάρξ, Philo has thus for the most part a negative view of it in his works;⁵⁴ it is closely related to πάθη and ἡδονή; “For the passions of the body are truly bastards, outlanders to the understanding, growths of the flesh in which they have their roots” (Her. 268). And furthermore, as Philo conceives of the soul as non-

⁵¹ David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria. On the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses*, Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001), 332.

⁵² Runia, *On the Creation*, 332.

⁵³ Winston, “Philo’s Ethical Theory,” 408.

⁵⁴ See TDNT 7:122.

fleshly and un-corporeal, the body of flesh is a burden to the soul, and a hindrance to its yearning to see God, the only One.⁵⁵

New Testament scholars usually state, when commenting on 1 Peter 2:11, that “ἐπιθυμία can be neutral, but here as in the rest of the NT is used as an essentially pejorative description of non-Christian conduct.”⁵⁶ In Philo, the noun ἐπιθυμία is used 218 times, the verbal form only 9 times.⁵⁷

Considering 1 Peter 2:11, and the question how a Philonic reader would understand its last part, it might be useful to draw upon how Philo perceives the last commandment of the Decalogue (Exod 20; Deut 5:21: οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις κτλ). Philo deals with this in Decal. 79–94 and Spec. 4,79–135, and gives prime attention to the nature of ἐπιθυμία.

“Every passion is blameworthy” (Πᾶν μὲν πάθος ἐπίληπτον). This is the point of departure for Philo’s exposition of the tenth commandment. But none of the passions is so troublesome as covetousness or desire of what we have not. Such desire “urges and drives the soul ever so far into the boundless distance while the object of the chase often flies insolently before it” (Spec. 4,80, cf. 4,82).

The passions as such belong to the irrational part of the soul, or rather; the irrational soul (cf. above). Hence the conflict here dealt with is a conflict between the rational and the irrational parts of the soul. The irrational part is needed so that the soul can cope with and accommodate itself to the demands of the body. Hence, as D.T. Runia observes,⁵⁸ “True self-control does not exist of mortification

⁵⁵ The adjectival form, σαρκικός, is never used in Philo’s works, though its equivalent σάρκιος is found in Leg. 2,20 and Sacr. 63, meaning ‘of flesh’, ‘fleshly’.

⁵⁶ E.g. here Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 120. Giesen, “Lebenszeugnis in der Fremde. Zum Verhalten der Christen in der paganen Gesellschaft (1 Peter 2.11–17),” 123, however, seems to favor a more neutral meaning in the word; only in 1 Peter 4:2 is it negative in “sich selbst.”

⁵⁷ This preference for the noun instead of the verbal form is probably because in the works of Philo, due to Stoic influences, the word is used for one of the four passions in ethical descriptions and admonitions.

⁵⁸ Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, 321.

of the flesh and neglect of the body” and its needs. Human beings have to take care of the body, it is, after all, the house of the soul; “for a sacred dwelling-place or shrine was being fashioned for the reasonable soul” (Opif. 137). Leg. 3,151–164 spells this out in more detail. Tied as humans are to the body, they have to comply with the bodily requirements. And Philo’s praise of, e.g., gymnastics, demonstrate his care of the body (Leg. 3,72; Abr. 48). The ‘sacred guide’ (i.e., the Law), Philo says, “tells the man who feels the pressure of bodily necessity the way to deal with it, namely, to comply with it only as far as he is actually obliged to do” (Leg. 3,151). The way to cope with this dilemma; the bodily needs on the one hand, and the danger of the passions to the soul on the other hand, Philo solves by giving an exposition of Deut 23:13:

“Let there be to thee, he says, a shovel upon thy girdle, and thou shalt dig with it” (Deut 23,13), that is to say, reason (λόγος) shall be upon the passion digging it out, tucking it up, not suffering it to clothe thee about. For God would have us gird up our passions, not wear them flowing and loose. . . . Let a shovel, then, that is, reason, follow the passion, preventing it from spreading abroad, for by this means we shall comply only with demands that are urgent, but from all that goes beyond this we shall abstain.

One cannot thus argue that Philo does not propagate a mortification of the flesh, neither is he an ardent follower of ascetism, but he advocates a certain amount of self-restraint.⁵⁹ Philo illustrates this further by telling how one should go about when present at entertainments and parties where there are an abundance of pleasures for the body; “we take our places at the table with λόγος like some weapon to parry blows” in order not to succumb to the passions and getting overdosed with food and drink.⁶⁰ Hence, the passions

⁵⁹ On Philo’s attitude to the body, see further David Winston, “Philo and the Rabbis on Sex and the Body,” in *The Ancestral Philosophy. Hellenistic Philosophy in Second Temple Judaism. Essays of David Winston*, edited by Gregory E. Sterling, Brown Judaic Studies 331/Studia Philonica Monographs 4 (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2001), 199–219, esp. 206–11.

⁶⁰ That various social activities in Alexandria as, e.g., the clubs and associa-

are to be controlled by reason. Reason is the distinguishing faculty in humans; by reason one is to discern and thus become a master over the passions. The struggle with passion is thus a struggle between the rational and the irrational parts of the soul.

Most New Testament scholars would probably agree that 1 Peter too does not advocate mortification of the flesh or strict ascetism, but that it recommend a certain restraint on the flesh: the fleshly lusts are to be avoided (ἀπέχεσθαι). L. Goppelt brings this out in a way that represents an understanding I think would have been endorsed by a Philonic reader too: "The meaning of this for one's behavior in relation to society is that the exodus cannot be accomplished by emigration out of society. Alien existence cannot be lived as flight from the world, since one who flees from the world denies thereby that he or she is still part of the world."⁶¹

A Philonic reader would thus probably not stumble at the warning of 1 Peter 2:11, but read it as an admonition to control the ἐπιθυμίας of the flesh by means of Reason. Furthermore, he or she would probably also be familiar with what is the specific dangerous content of the fleshly desires. We have stated above, that to the author of 1 Peter, this content is given in 1 Peter 4:1–2: ἀσελγείας, ἐπιθυμίας, οἰνοφλυγίας, κόμοις, πότοις καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίας. Several of these items would be very well known to a Philonic reader as especially dangerous aspects of the passions, not to say ἐπιθυμία.

In his exposition of the tenth commandment, Philo returns to the threefold division of the soul, reason, high spirit and desire (cf. above). Reason is located in the head, high spirit in the chest, but the desire is given the space around the navel and the regions below: "For it was right that desire so lacking in reasoning power should be lodged as far as might be from reason's royal seat, almost at the outermost boundary, and that being above all others an animal insatiable and

tions were a real problem to the Jews is evident by the way Philo discusses participation in such gatherings in several of his works. See on this Seland, "Philo and the Clubs and Associations of Alexandria".

⁶¹ Goppelt, Leonhard, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 157.

incontinent it should be pastured in the region where food-taking and copulation dwell" (Spec. 3,94). Hence desire is here especially related to food, drink and sexual matters, cf. 1 Peter 2:11. It is a very common topos in Philo's expositions that the 'belly and the organs below' are especially pointed out as seats of the passions. Hence we suggest a Philonic reader would easily associate 1 Peter 2:11; 4:3 with these Philonic expositions too.

K.O. Sandnes has dealt extensively with the belly in Philo's writings in a recent monograph, and we might profitably draw from his work here.⁶² To Philo the belly, often mentioned together with "the organs below", is again and again mentioned as the seat of the passions, and especially of desire.⁶³ In various ways he returns to this issue, how it is present in the human conditions, and how to deal with it. According to Sandnes, "Philo is quite consistent in speaking of the belly as a codeword for gluttony and sexual misbehavior. This is almost a stereotype in his writings."⁶⁴ The power of the belly is considered a constant danger to the wise man (QE 2,39): Considering the serpent, who creeps on his belly, Philo finds that this feature is a symbol for pleasures (Opif. 77–81); in discussing the figures of Jacob and Esau (Virt. 207–219; QG 4,160–245), Jacob and Esau represent the ways of self-control and love of pleasure respectively.

In dealing with how to cope with the passions, the ἐγκράτεια is praised as a central element of the Judaism as such; Jewish festivals are furthering a lifestyle of simplicity and self-mastery in contrast to the lifestyle represented by the pagan festive gatherings, while pagan feasts are devoted to the pleasures of the belly.⁶⁵ The soberness and sobriety of the Jewish festivals are also emphasized in his account

⁶² Sandnes, *Belly and Body in the Pauline Epistles*, 108–32.

⁶³ See here especially Opif. 158; Leg. All. 3,65–119; 3,142; Sacr. 49; Post. 155; Cong. 80; Mos. 1,160; 2,23; Spec. 2,195; 3,43; Virt. 182.208.

⁶⁴ Sandnes, *Belly and Body in the Pauline Epistles*, 131.

⁶⁵ See on this also my article: Seland, "Philo and the Clubs and Associations of Alexandria."

of the Therapeutae (Cont. 34–90). Even the celebration of the Sabbath is a symbol of ἐγκράτεια (Spec. 1,174–176).

According to this picture of the interpretative universe of a Philonic reader, s/he would have had no problems in understanding the mentioning of ἀσέλγεια (unrestrained living), οἰνοφλυγία (drunkenness), κῶμος (drunken reveling), and πότος (drinking parties) as central aspects of the ἐπιθυμία to be avoided, to be shun and fought against by means of the virtues and knowledge (education) as set forth in the works of Philo. The incompatibility of the ἐπιθυμία with the sound and healthy life of the soul, and in fact, its warfare against the soul would be quite familiar. The interpretation of Achtemeier of this part of 2:11 as indicating “that the Christians are caught in a war of cultures, not in a war within themselves”⁶⁶ would probably have been considered reductionistic by a Philonic reader.

Lastly: How would a Philonic reader consider the nature of the soul in 1 Peter? Would s/he understand it in a Hebrew or a Greek/Philonic way? The answer is obvious to me: There is very little in 1 Peter 2:11 that would problematize the understanding inherent in his or her symbolic Philonic universe of thought.

A few scholars have admitted that 1 Peter 2:11 has a somewhat different focus than the other passages where the term ψυχή occurs; in 2:11 it is set in contrast to σαρκί, while this horizon is missing in the other verses (1:9,22; 2:25; 4,19). It is probably this contrast that makes Schweizer characterize it as “the most hellenized ψυχή passage in the NT.”⁶⁷ When considering the rest of the passages in which the term ψυχή occur, a Philonic and Greek understanding of them all may nevertheless seem rather close. In 1:9 the goal of the Christians’ hope is described as σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν, in 1:22 the Christians are exhorted to Τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες, in 2:25 the readers are characterized as some who, having been astray now have turned “to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls” (ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ

⁶⁶ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 176, note 51.

⁶⁷ See TDNT 9:653. Also Dautzenberg (Dautzenberg, “Σωτηρία ψυχῶν [1 Peter 1,9],” 273, note 55) admits that the emphasis is somewhat different in 2:11.

ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν), in 4:19 the sufferers are to entrust their souls to God (παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν). A Philonic reader would not find much in these particular passages that would not fit into a Philonic universe of understanding. Salvation (1:9) is described as salvation of the souls. The readers are encouraged to sanctify their souls (1:22); God (or Christ) is the overseer—shepherd of the souls, and finally, in their suffering, they are to entrust their souls to God. In all these sayings the soul could be read as something inherent in the Christians, something they possess, something they must keep, sanctify, entrust, take care of until the time of its final salvation.

Commentators most often read *ψυχή* in all passages of 1 Peter as denoting ‘human beings or personal selves’, as ‘lives’ or ‘living beings’.⁶⁸ Such an holistic sense of the term (Elliott) would probably not be the most familiar to a Philonic reader. The ‘soul’ in 1 Peter 2:11 at least could most possibly be understood as an entity that came into the human body at birth, that lived within it as in a temporary dwelling place, and would depart at the moment of the body’s death, returning to its heavenly realm. Hence we may still say that 1 Peter 2:11 is “the most Hellenized *ψυχή* passage in the NT”;⁶⁹ Is it not only possible but also probable that all the *ψυχή* passages of 1 Peter should be read in a Hellenized Philonic way? An investigation of this question would have to take into consideration the specific symbolic universe of the 1 Letter of Peter, not at least its apocalyptic and specific Christian eschatological features. The further discussion of this issue is, however, beyond the horizon of this study.

Conclusions

The works of Philo and 1 Peter are different, but have nevertheless several structural features in common. Among these are their reliance on narratives from the Hebrew Scriptures, their application of these

⁶⁸ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 465.

⁶⁹ Cf. TDNT 9:653 (E. Schweizer).

narratives as models of behavior as well as their creation of new stories. Furthermore, while 1 Peter 2:11 is an exhortation, the works of Philo have many comparable aspects of exhortation too.

Postulating a Philonic reader of 1 Peter as a reader well versed in the works of Philo, we suggested s/he would find several other similarities: In addition to functional similarities of the use of words and phrases, a Philonic reader of 1 Peter 2:11 would also recognize several common terms as *πάροικος*, *παρεπίδημος*, *ἐπιθυμία*, *σάρξ*, and *ψυχή*. In the Philonic universe of meaning, these terms are especially associated with a particular understanding of the wise man as *πάροικος καὶ παρεπίδημος*. The wise man is the one who focuses his attention on the vision of God, the only One, struggling with his *ἐπιθυμία* as it tries to distract him from his goal by tempting and subjecting his soul to the tortures of passion. The wise man subdues his *ἐπιθυμία* by help of Reason: By education into the virtues and a moderate life he proceeds on his way toward the light.

This process in the Philonic universe is also considered as a part of the migration of the wise man's soul back to its heavenly origin. The soul, according to the Philonic view, is not the essence of man, his personality as an expression of his subjectivity or of human beings in their totality. The soul is considered as an entity of its own that enters the body at birth and leaves it at the death of the body, having the body as a temporary abode.

Hence we asked how would a Philonic reader interpret 1 Peter 2:11 with its cluster of so many well-known terms from the works of Philo? Would s/he possibly understand it, and especially its anthropological part (11c), in the ways most modern interpreters understand it? Probably not. There is close to nothing in 1 Peter 2:11 that would problematize the understanding inherent in his or her symbolic Philonic universe of thought. Hence 1 Peter 2:11 may not only be considered as "the most Hellenized *ψυχή* passage in the NT", but as one of the most Philonic passages of the NT too.

CHAPTER FIVE

“CONDUCT YOURSELVES HONORABLY AMONG THE GENTILES” (1 PETER 2:12). ACCULTURATION AND ASSIMILATION IN 1 PETER

Introduction

In spite of being rather brief among the New Testament letters, the 1 Letter of Peter has been used as an important source for investigations of several aspects of the life and thought of the early Christians. Not only has the search for its author, addressees, time and place been extensively studied, but issues as its theology, christology, ecclesiology, eschatology, the nature of the tribulations echoed in the letter, and its view of the recipient's relations to society at large have been investigated. Recent developments in the methods used in such studies have led to further enhancements of the results.¹

The present study investigates the relations of the intended readers to society at large as argued by the author, by focusing on the related issues of acculturation and assimilation. This is not a new focus: many of the studies dealing with the biblical writings, however, have used the somewhat ambiguous term *hellenization* when probing into this area. But most often without any elaborate definitions of the categories used.² Some studies have, however, applied terms as acculturation and assimilation,³ and that even in studies of 1 Peter. This study picks up this trend.

¹ Sylva, D., “1 Peter Studies: The State of the Discipline”; Sylva, D., “A 1 Peter Bibliography”; Sylva, Dennis, “The Critical Exploration of 1 Peter”; Casurella, *Bibliography of Literature on First Peter*.

² See e.g., studies on the so-called hellenization Martin Hengel, *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians: Aspects of Hellenization of Judaism in the Pre-Christian Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980).

³ Both in biblical and “classical” studies, these terms are often used without

The thesis argued here is that a) the terms acculturation and assimilation have—so far—not been used in a way that is much helpful for understanding the social strategies in 1 Peter. Instead of constructing our own definitions of terms, we should b) draw on the already extensive use of these terms in prevalent social science studies. Lastly, c) in studying these issues, we should not forget that the Christians of 1 Peter are first generation Christians, that is, they are still in a process of being socialized into the Christian world view. We might describe them as being in a *liminal* situation as newly converted Christians.⁴ Hence their attitudes to Graeco-Roman institutions of life is a secondary aspect of the author's strategy in this letter; that is, more as a consequence of the intended acculturation into Christianity than as a program of assimilation to the Graeco-Roman society.

Hence the procedure adopted here is as follows: First we present a brief review of recent studies concerned with the relation of the recipients of 1 Peter to society at large, especially focusing on those applying the categories of acculturation/assimilation; then we have a closer look at these terms in recent social-science research, trying to work out a heuristic model. The last section then, applies this model to the 1 Letter of Peter.

An additional introductory remark on the addressees might be in order: The phrase used above; “as argued by the author” signals that we do not presume to know much about the real first readers of this letter. What we do know is the author's explicit and implicit characterizations of the readers, and his statements and arguments

any further definition: for the latter, see e.g., Kathryn Lomas, *Rome and the Western Greeks 350 BC–AD 200. Conquest and Acculturation in Southern Italy* (London: Routledge, 1993) The study of M.L. Okun is a nice exception here; see Marcia L. Okun, *The Early Roman Frontier in the Upper Rhine Area. Assimilation and Acculturation on a Roman Frontier*, BAR International Series 547 (Oxford, 1989). See now also Philip A. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations. Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).

⁴ See further on this aspect below, and see especially Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 109–78.

about their conditions, i.e., how he wants the recipients to respond to his admonitions and exhortations (ἔγραψα παρακαλῶν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρῶν; 1 Peter 5:12). We have no further hard evidence about the circumstances of the actual recipients than what is to be found in the letter itself. General social information from this area is interesting, however, for understanding how the admonitions and exhortations could possibly be understood. Hence we are looking for the issues of assimilation and acculturation *as argued* in the 1 letter of Peter.

Relevant Trends in Recent Research

Trends in Recent Studies of 1 Peter

How did the author expect the Christians to behave in the ordinary day-to-day life in the provinces of Asia Minor? How did he expect them to behave as Christians in the various challenges they met in a society saturated with polytheism? How much could they be engaged in their surroundings? How did the author of 1 Peter want the readers to respond to the various aspects of the Graeco-Roman society they lived in?

These questions can be rephrased using models of assimilation and acculturation. But before defining and applying these concepts further, we shall have a look at how they have been used in some recent research, especially research concerned with 1 Peter.

There is, in fact, not much to be found. Terms like assimilation have been used; but mostly *en passant*; that is without being further defined. There are a few exceptions, however, and some important studies by David L. Balch and John H. Elliott are here outstanding. In addition, I will draw on a couple of recent works by John M.G. Barclay who apply these terms, though not in studies of 1 Peter.

In 1981 David L. Balch published his important 1974 dissertation on the household codes in 1 Peter.⁵ In the same year John

⁵ Balch, D.L., *Let Wives be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*.

H. Elliott published his study *A Home for the Homeless*,⁶ in which he was also able to draw on the study of Balch. In December next year there was a discussion between these two at the SBL Annual Meeting in New York on “1 Peter: Social separation or Acculturation?”. Their contributions were published in 1986 in a volume edited by Charles H. Talbert.⁷ Both have presented their arguments in additional publications.⁸

Balch’s dissertation deals primarily with the household codes (1 Peter 2,13–3,9). Instead of deriving these from Stoic ethical traditions, he argues that they stem from the household traditions, trying to regulate the relations between the various members of a household. Ultimately, this goes at least back to Aristotle’s *Politics* (1253b) where he distinguishes between the three groups of master-slave, husband-wife and father-children; aspects that are central to the New Testament household-codes too. Balch also argues that such codes were used in a apologetic and legitimating way in Graeco-Roman sources. Accordingly, when the early Christians applied these codes, they were used to argue and demonstrate their conformity to the accepted rules of the Graeco-Roman societies in which they lived. Hence the household codes are primarily apologetic in intention.⁹ This strategy Balch also categorizes as assimilation; the author’s purpose in using the household code in 1 Peter was to encourage the readers to integrate themselves in the society, to accommodate and assimilate.

John H. Elliott, on the other hand, criticizes Balch for not taking into account that as a sectarian group, the readers of 1 Peter needed a distinctive identity; that he ignores the various orientations present in 1 Peter; and that he fails to account for “the letter’s repeated call for Christian separation from the world and . . . understates its

⁶ Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*.

⁷ David Balch, “Hellenization/acculturation in 1 Peter,” in *Perspectives on 1 Peter*, edited by Ch. H. Talbert (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 79–101; Elliott, “1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy: A Discussion with David Balch.”

⁸ Balch, David L., “Household Codes”; Elliott, *What is Social Science Criticism?* 70–86.

⁹ Balch, David L., “Household Codes,” 28ff.

missionary interests as well.”¹⁰ According to Elliott, Balch’s understanding “misconstrues the function of the Petrine code in particular and the strategy of 1 Peter in general” (p. 216), and “The social conformity and assimilation which, in his (= Balch’s) view, the Petrine Haustafel is intended to foster are precisely the dangers which 1 Peter through the household instruction intended to discourage” (p. 218).

The terms assimilation, accommodation and acculturation are not used very explicitly in these two works, but the latter term is more in the forefront in the later discussion. In Balch’s contribution, with the title “Hellenization/Acculturation in 1 Peter”, he applies these terms as keywords. Here he sets out to “argue that sociological and anthropological theories of acculturation throw considerable light on the social situation reflected in 1 Peter, . . .”¹¹ He refers to some American field reports, especially as abstracted by B.J. Siegel.¹² Acculturation, according to Balch, seems to represent, inter alia, that the author of 1 Peter phrased himself as to argue for an adaptation of Graeco-Roman structures in Christian family lives in order to avoid criticism. But this represented, according to Balch, in fact that “Petrine Christianity accepted hellenistic social values in tension with important values in Jewish tradition (in the Torah) and even in tension with the early Jesus movement, changes that raise questions about continuity and identity in early Christianity” (p. 81). But we do not find much of exact definitions of what acculturation really is. The closest he comes to a definition is “intercultural transmission” (p. 86), or “the selective adaption of value systems.” As to the process of acculturation, he adopts the understanding of Siegel that “In the most general terms we can make two statements about intercultural transmission: (1) that the patterns and values of the receiving culture seem to function as a selective screen in a manner that results in the enthusiastic acceptance of some elements, the firm

¹⁰ Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 111.

¹¹ Balch, David, “Hellenization/acculturation in 1 Peter,” 81.

¹² Bernhard J. Siegel, *Acculturation. Critical Abstracts, North America*, Stanford Anthropological Series (Stanford: Stanford University, 1955).

rejection of other elements; and (2) that the elements which are transmitted undergo transformations in the receiving cultural systems.”¹³ According to Balch, then, in 1 Peter we find reflected both a tendency to accommodate to the Graeco-Roman society, and that this process is not easy to adapt to the standard Jewish values and the ethical traditions from Jesus.

Elliott, in his paper—which is a reworked version of the response he gave to Balch in the 1982 discussion—does not focus only on the household codes, but looks for the situation and strategy of 1 Peter as a whole. With regard to our terminology looked for here, there is not much congruence in these two papers. When Elliott summarizes Balch’s view, he says that according to Balch 1 Peter is “advocating a program of Christian assimilation to secular society,”¹⁴ or he uses the term “social assimilation.”¹⁵ Balch does not, however, use the term assimilation in his paper, but acculturation. Elliott on his side does not use the term acculturation except once.¹⁶ Elliott makes much out of the fact that Balch focuses primarily on the household codes instead of considering these in light of the overall structure of the letter. He also keeps to his “conversionist sect” model,¹⁷ a model Balch rejects as inappropriate for understanding the structure of these communities.

With regard to *assimilation* (Balch: “acculturation”), Elliott once refers

¹³ See here Balch, David, “Hellenization/acculturation in 1 Peter,” 86 quoting from B.J. Siegel et al., *Acculturation: An Exploratory Formulation*, AA 56 (1954), 973–1002, here from p. 985.

¹⁴ Elliott, “1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy: A Discussion with David Balch,” 63, cf. 65.70.71.73.

¹⁵ Elliott, “1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy: A Discussion with David Balch,” 71.72.

¹⁶ Cf. p. 68. Had it not been for this quotation, I would have surmised that either Balch used “assimilation” in the version Elliott read, or Elliott is consistently changing Balch’s “acculturation” to “assimilation.” Elliott says (p. 70), that Balch’s conclusion is that “The Jewish author is assimilating.” But in the printed version, at least, Balch explicitly says that “the Jewish author of 1 Peter is acculturating” (p. 97). It looks like Elliott did not see any difference between these two terms.

¹⁷ Bryan R. Wilson, “An Analysis of Sect Development,” *American Sociological Review* 24 (1959): 3–15.

to Milton M. Gordon,¹⁸ and states that the phenomenon and process of assimilation is complex, “involving not only the change of cultural patterns to those of <the> host society” (“acculturation”), but also “large-scale entrance into cliques, clubs, and institutions of the host society (“identificational assimilation”), absence of prejudice (“attitude receptional assimilation”), absence of discrimination (“behavior receptional assimilation”), and the absence of value and power conflict (“civic assimilation”).¹⁹ But he does not make much out of it in the paper, except to expand *assimilation* some times as *social assimilation*, but without defining this any further. Elliott’s own conclusion runs like this: “My contention is that nothing in 1 Peter, including its discussion of household duties, indicates an interest in promoting social assimilation. It was precisely a temptation to assimilate so as to avoid further suffering that the letter intended to counteract.”²⁰

There are many interesting aspects in this discussion of 1 Peter; most of them we cannot deal with any further here. But in light of our specific focus on “acculturation” and “assimilation”, it is regrettable that there is so little definition of what these terms involve. In the following sections we shall deal with works that try to be more explicit in their use of these terms, and then we return to 1 Peter again.

The View of John M.G. Barclay

The only biblical scholar I have found, in fact, dealing with Jewish and early Christian attitudes to social issues as assimilation and acculturation is John M.G. Barclay.²¹ Hence he deserves a special section here before looking into more sociological studies.

¹⁸ Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life. The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

¹⁹ Elliot, *1 Peter, its strategy*, p. 71: And he continues: “A thorough consideration of 1 Peter as reflecting a situation of Christian assimilation to Greco-Roman society would require examination of all these factors in the assimilation process, . . .”

²⁰ Elliott, “1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy: A Discussion with David Balch,” 72–73.

²¹ John M.G. Barclay, “Paul Among Diaspora Jews: Anomaly or Apostate?” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 60 (1993): 89–120; John M.G. Barclay,

Barclay distinguishes between assimilation, acculturation and accommodation. *Assimilation* is used by him as referring to social integration: “it concerns social contacts, social interaction and social practices.”²² As such it should be measured by both how frequent and of what quality the Jewish contacts with the non-Jews were. The other category he uses is *acculturation*; by that he focuses on non-material aspects of the culture as in particular language, values and intellectual traditions. In as much as the Jews acquired common cultural ideals and recognized virtues, they may be said to have become acculturated.

Then he introduces a third category; *accommodation*. It concerns “the use to which acculturation is put, in particular the degree to which Jewish and Hellenistic cultural traditions are merged, or alternatively, polarized.”²³ Accommodation is thus dependent on how acculturation is used; it may be used in an integrative way, or oppositional, that is to distance oneself from the surrounding culture. We can get a clearer impression of these three categories if we print the categories he himself presents (from high to low within each group):

Assimilation (Social integration)

Abandonment of key Jewish social distinctives,
Gymnasium/education,
Attendance of Greek athletics/theater,
Commercial employment with non-Jews,
Social life confined to the Jewish Community;

Acculturation (Language/education)

Scholarly expertise,
Familiarity with Greek literature, rhetoric, philosophy and theology,
Acquaintance with common moral values,
No facility in Greek.

Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE) (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), 82ff.

²² Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)*, 92.

²³ Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)*, 96.

Accommodation (use of acculturation)

Submersion of Jewish cultural uniqueness,
 Reinterpretation of Judaism preserving some uniqueness,
 Antagonism to Graeco-Roman culture.

Barclay also tries to distinguish between high, medium and low assimilation. *High assimilation* is demonstrated by those he characterizes as Jews fully integrated into the political/religious affairs of the state, social climbers, Jews who married Gentiles and failed to raise their children as Jews, Jewish critics and opponents of Judaism, allegorists who abandoned key Jewish practices, and some isolated Jews. *Medium assimilation* is to be found among Jews prominent in court but distinguishably Jewish, well-educated Jews who participated in the social and cultural life in Alexandria, Jews in various forms of employment for non-Jews, and those in legal associations. Low assimilated Jews are exhibited by those who live in Jewish residential districts, as resulting effects of social conflicts, and by the Therapeutae. When dealing with specific persons or literature, he finds Philo of Alexandria to be high on the scale of acculturation, low in accommodation and low on the scale of assimilation; the Book of 4 Maccabees he also finds as high on the scale of acculturation, minimally accommodated, and low in assimilation, while Paul, the Apostle, he suggests to be relatively near the bottom on the scale of accommodation, relatively low in acculturation, but high on assimilation.²⁴

I find Barclay's presentations interesting, but also somewhat problematic. First, he seems to be fairly little informed by social science studies dealing with acculturation and assimilation. He uses his terminology partly different from social-science studies, and does not discuss these, or argue for his preference of definitions.

Second, it is not very clear what relations he considers there to be between assimilation and acculturation: Is, for instance, assimilation a prerequisite or a consequence of acculturation? And what

²⁴ Barclay, "Paul Among Diaspora Jews: Anomaly or Apostate?" 99–111.

about accommodation? According to my reading of his exposition, it would be natural to see assimilation as dependent on degree of accommodation, that is, on the way acculturation is used. But I also get the impression that he uses these categories as two or perhaps three parallel ways of looking at the relations to society.

Furthermore, I do think our use of such categories as assimilation and acculturation should be influenced by the use of the ways they are used in social science studies. Hence we shall have a look at some aspects of this use in the next section.

Acculturation/Assimilation in Recent Research

The acculturation/assimilation fields of problems have been intensively studied in the last century. No extensive review of this research is to be presented here, both because of the limited competence of the present writer in this field of research, and because of the variety and complexity of the research concerned. Some brief comments will, however, be presented before we deal more extensively with some models of the acculturation/assimilation process considered important for a study of these aspects in New Testament times.

There has been a rather large flow of studies dealing with acculturation and assimilation. Many of these have been carried out in the United States, not at least triggered by the influx of people from various nations and cultures, creating a melting pot of interests and preferences. Recent studies have also looked at the other side of the problem, the issue of discrimination,²⁵ a feature very influential on the assimilation process.

The interest of focus seems originally to have been the problems related to migration, especially immigration, and the various forms of acculturation/assimilation possible. Then there was a larger focus on the various variables influencing the kind, speed and nature of

²⁵ Anders Lange and Charles Westin, *Etnisk Diskriminering och Social Identitet. En Rapport från Diskrimineringsutredningen* (Stockholm: Liber Förlag, 1981).

acculturation/assimilation. In more recent decades additional methods and focus of interests have been applied; among the most prominent here seem those of social psychology and communication research agendas and perspectives.

B.S. Heisler, writing from a migration-research point of view,²⁶ sketches the history of research on acculturation/assimilation as consisting of three phases: The “classical period” originated at the turn of the twentieth century, and dominated the research literature until the late 1960s. This period, she claims, was dominated by “push and pull and assimilation theories.” It is the period in which one studied the large immigration waves to the United States, influenced by the ideal of easy integration and rapid assimilation. Acculturation/assimilation was considered as an unilinear movement through various stages, resulting in the disappearances of ethnic differences and ending in complete assimilation; an assimilation most often considered as americanization,—also called the melting-pot theory/ies. The primary focus in this research was on group assimilation, not on individuals, and the process was considered a one-way process. A central scholar in the later part of this period was Milton M. Gordon,²⁷ who considered acculturation/assimilation to be a multifarious process involving several stages, eventually ending in total assimilation. His views still have some adherents, though most of them offer some additional aspects and elaborations of his model. We shall return to his model later in this study.

The second period of research Heisler labels as “The modern period.”²⁸ Its beginnings is located to the early seventies, and its main characteristics is claimed to be a shift from a corporate to an individual focus, a shift from functionalist models focusing on

²⁶ Barbara Schmitter Heisler, “The Future of Immigrant Incorporation: Which Models? Which Concepts?” *International Migration Review* 26 (1991): 623–45.

²⁷ See especially Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life. The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*.

²⁸ Heisler, “The Future of Immigrant Incorporation: Which Models? Which Concepts?” 627ff.

equilibrium/order aspects of society to conflict perspectives, and a heavy politicalization of the research agendas, not at least influenced by Marxism. Main impetuses to these changes were, *inter alia*, the appearance of the civil rights movements, the fact that several—especially black—Americans were not assimilated in spite of their long term residence, and the post-war new waves of immigrants from Latin-America.

For a third period, perhaps to be termed “the post-modern period”, a period of which we are in the early phases of now, Heisler considers it important to draw on the best of insights arrived at in both of the preceding periods, while at the same time taking account of the new aspects of society as, *inter alia*, the fact that many immigrant groups have not fared well, the persistence of racism, and the—partly conflicting—ideals of a multicultural society and ethnic pluralism. In addition various aspects of the immigrants have to be considered, such as their time of immigration, and their own attitudes to and possibilities of acculturation/assimilation. Heisler²⁹ considers acculturation/assimilation models as less useful for research on present day immigration conditions, but still applicable and useful for historical studies, not least if they are freed from their notions of unilinearity and predetermined outcome.

In addition to these aspects of recent research, I would point out the prevalence of acculturation/assimilation research associated with social psychology and modern communication research. The broadening of perspectives represented by easier access to other cultures than our own—as demonstrated by the increase in tourism, short-time experiences of other cultures because of study or business travels and sojourning, increase in cross-cultural political unions as the Common Market, and the continuing immigration waves—partly because of various refugees—resulting in multi-cultural societies in countries hitherto relatively untouched by multi-cultural emigration

²⁹ Heisler, “The Future of Immigrant Incorporation: Which Models? Which Concepts?” 631.

waves, as e.g., Norway—has fostered an increasing interest in social psychological aspects of the human mind and behavior. Social-psychological studies of acculturation were published already in the seventies,³⁰ and further interesting studies have been produced by scholars as, e.g., Harry Triandis.³¹ In communication research, scholars as William B. Gudykunst and Young Yun Kim have especially focused aspects of acculturation/assimilation.³² The shift of focus from immigration research to present-day multicultural societies is partly demonstrated by their preferred terminology of *adaptation* instead of acculturation/assimilation.³³ Their research intends to represent an integration between the theoretical and empirical research endeavors, between the psychological, communicational, and anthropological approaches, and between the studies of long-term and short-term adaptation.³⁴ As such it is typical of tendencies today to integrate viewpoints and insights from several disciplines into new research profiles and agendas.

³⁰ See e.g., the studies collected in Amado M. Padilla, *Acculturation: Theory, Models, and Some New Findings*, edited by Amado M. Padilla, AAAS Selected Symposium, 39. (Boulder, Colo.: Published by Westview Press for the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1980).

³¹ Harry C. Triandis, *Culture and Social Behavior* (McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994); Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*.

³² A presentation of Kim's view of the state of research can be found in Young Yun Kim, "Intercultural Adaptation," eds. Molefi Kete Asanta and William B. Gudykunst, in *Handbook of International and Intercultural Communication* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1989), 275–94. See also Young Yun Kim and William B. Gudykunst, eds, *Cross-Cultural Adaptation. Current Approaches*, International and Intercultural Communication Annual Volume XI (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1988). I have also profited from the brief presentation of Robert Wichert, "Acculturation and Intercultural Identity in the Post-Modern World," published on the Internet: <http://www.crl.com/~rwicher/icid.html>. A brief bibliography provided by Bruce J. Malina in an e-mail of Feb. 6. 1998, has also been of great help to me.

³³ "The term cross-cultural adaptation is used here in a broad and all-inclusive sense to refer to the complex process through which an individual acquires an increasing level of "fitness" or "compatibility" in the new cultural environment. The term is also intended to accommodate other similar terms such as acculturation, assimilation, and adjustment" Kim and Gudykunst, *Cross-Cultural Adaptation. Current Approaches*, 9.

³⁴ Kim and Gudykunst, *Cross-Cultural Adaptation. Current Approaches*, 12.

A Closer Look at the Acculturation/Assimilation Issues

An informative place to start should be the articles on acculturation and assimilation in *The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. According to its article on Acculturation,³⁵ this term is to be understood as referring to “those changes set in motion by the coming together of societies with different cultural traditions” (p. 21). The similarity of this concept with that of assimilation is, furthermore, fully demonstrated in the parallel article on assimilation where assimilation is defined as “a process in which persons of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds come to interact, free of these constraints, in the life of the larger society.”³⁶ The similarity and sometimes even confusion is fully admitted as prevalent in much literature, and it is stated that anthropologists tend to prefer ‘acculturation’ while the term ‘assimilation’ is more prominent among sociologists. For some scholars assimilation and acculturation are synonymous, or assimilation is considered as including acculturation; others see assimilation as an end-product of acculturation. This confusion in terminology eventually led to the development of a consensus definition of acculturation, worked out by a group of scholars in 1936.³⁷ It has been applied in much research for several decades, and runs thus: “Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups.” This definition established a framework for the further study of acculturation;³⁸ especially important was its pinpointing of the kind of contact concerned (continuous first-hand

³⁵ Edward H. Spicer, “Acculturation,” in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 1–2 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1968), 21–27.

³⁶ George Eaton Simpson, “Assimilation,” in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 1–2 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1968), 438.

³⁷ Edward H. Spicer, “Acculturation,” in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1972), 22.

³⁸ For the use of this definition in many subsequent studies, see Siegel, *Acculturation. Critical Abstracts, North America, and Padilla, Acculturation: Theory, Models, and Some New Findings*.

contact), and the possibility of a not only a uni-directional change, but a change in one or both groups concerned.

The understanding and use of the categories acculturation/assimilation still suffers some confusion. One of the more creative models presented in the 1950s, was that of Milton M. Gordon. In the following we shall provide a fuller presentation of his model before proceeding to the arguments presented in 1 Peter.

Towards a Model of Acculturation/Assimilation

Gordon's model is presented in his famous book about *Assimilation in American Life. The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*. In addition to specifically present a model for understanding acculturation/assimilation, he deals with the prevalent official assimilation theories and immigration agendas associated with the three catch-words 'Anglo-conformity', 'melting pot' and 'cultural pluralism'. In conformity with much similar research of his days, he also suggests specific guidelines for agencies concerned with orienting the immigrants to American life.³⁹ But it is primarily his model of acculturation/assimilation that is of interest to us here.

Gordon proposes seven basic subprocesses in the process of assimilation, of which the first is also called acculturation:

Cultural or behavioral assimilation (acculturation):

Change of cultural patterns to those of host society

Structural assimilation:

Large-scale entrance into cliques, clubs, and institutions of host society, on primary group level.

Marital assimilation:

Large-scale intermarriage

³⁹ See e.g. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life. The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*, 241ff.

Identificational assimilation:

Development of sense of peoplehood based exclusively on host society

Attitude receptional assimilation:

Absence of prejudice

Behavior receptional assimilation:

Absence of discrimination

Civic assimilation:

Absence of value and power conflict

From his studies, he is able to hypothesize further about the relations of the various subprocesses. As these represent important aspects of his model, we quote them rather extensively here. He states that:

1) cultural assimilation, or acculturation, is likely to be the first of the types of assimilation to occur when a minority group arrives on the scene; and

2) cultural assimilation, or acculturation, of the minority group may take place even when none of the other types of assimilation occurs simultaneously or later, and this condition of "acculturation only" may continue indefinitely.⁴⁰ Gordon also adds a third subprocess:

3) Once structural assimilation has occurred, either simultaneously with or subsequent to acculturation, all of the other types of assimilation will naturally follow.⁴¹

The perhaps most important aspects of his model are that acculturation and assimilation are not the same, and that acculturation may go on indefinitely without involving any further assimilation. His last suggestion, however, on what follows after the structural assimilation phase is reached, has been severely criticized for being too deterministic. Inherent here is also the criticism that his model is too structural-functionalistic, favoring the equilibrium of various

⁴⁰ Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life. The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*, 77.

⁴¹ Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life. The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*, 81.

groups of society, and thus paying too little attention to the prevalence and possible positive effects of conflict and conflict-processes.⁴² Gordon has in an later article, however, tried to integrate some power and conflict perspectives as a further development of his model.⁴³

His model remains, however, deterministic, and it is not quite clear what social issues might foster the progression from cultural to social assimilation, and a potential further progression. Here some suggestions of clarification as provided by Teske and Nelson are valuable.⁴⁴ Reviewing relevant literature, they concluded that in spite of the many similarities between acculturation and assimilation there are some major differences: with regard to the similarities, both are to be understood as a process, both may be treated as either an individual or a group process, and both involves direct contact. But, in opposition to acculturation, assimilation requires a change in values concerned, a change in reference group, and perhaps most important; out-group acceptance is necessary.

Furthermore, recent developments in several countries—amply demonstrated by much research—have shown that acculturation/assimilation is not the only possible outcome when groups from different cultures meet and have to live together. Adjustment is not the only strategy of adaptation possible, and assimilation not the only form of accommodation chosen. Drawing on observations close to those of Teske & Nelson above, John W. Berry has proposed a framework in which to understand the possible ways different groups or individuals may relate.⁴⁵ He starts with the following two questions:

⁴² Cf. here Heisler, "The Future of Immigrant Incorporation: Which Models? Which Concepts?" 625–27.

⁴³ Milton M. Gordon, "Toward a General Theory of Racial and Ethnic Group Relations," in *Ethnicity. Theory and Experience*, edited by N. Glazer and D.P. Moynihan (London, 1978), 84–110.

⁴⁴ Raymond C. Teske and Bardin H. Nelson, "Acculturation and Assimilation: A Clarification," *Am. Ethnol.* 1 (1974): 351–67.

⁴⁵ John W. Berry, "Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation," in *Acculturation. Theory, Models and Some New Findings*, edited by Amado M. Padilla, AAAS Selected Symposium 39 (Washington: Westview Press, 1980), 9–25; Lomas, *Rome and the Western Greeks 350 BC–AD 200. Conquest and Acculturation in Southern Italy*.

“Is it considered to be of value to maintain cultural identity and characteristics?”, and “Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with other groups?” These questions, which are heavily value- and ideologyloaded, may receive several kinds of answers. But if one delimits these to ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers, we get four possible options. These he terms assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization. When the answer to the first of these two questions is ‘no’, but to the second ‘yes’, *assimilation* is the option preferred. Berry here draws on the model of Gordon to further understand the process of assimilation involved.⁴⁶ When the answer is ‘yes’ to maintain cultural identity but ‘no’ to maintain relationships with other groups, the option chosen is to be termed *separation*. If this is a solution imposed on a minority group by the dominant group, it should be termed *segregation*, to “keep people in their places.” If, however, the answers are ‘yes’ to both questions, one has a situation of *integration*. Here we find both a willingness to retain cultural identity as well as to move into the greater society. This option may in many ways be similar to the cultural/behavioral assimilation option—also called acculturation—in Gordon’s model. Finally, there is the possibility of a ‘no’ to both questions; then we have a situation of *marginalization* both with regard to primary and secondary group. These various options may be tabulated thus:

<i>Options</i>	<i>Retention of identity</i>	<i>Positive to other groups?</i>
Assimilation	No	Yes
Integration	Yes	Yes
Separation	Yes	No
Marginalization	No	No

The processes occurring when a minority group, or some of its individuals, try to adapt to the majority society, may thus be of very different kinds, and have various outcomes. Sometimes one gets the

⁴⁶ John Berry, Uichol Kim, and Pawel Boski, “Psychological Acculturation of

impression that assimilation is the only option. An integration in the society at large while still retaining the major aspects of one's own identity is also to be considered an option.⁴⁷ In the following we shall, however, investigate the 1 Letter of Peter with regard to the aspects of acculturation/assimilation suggested in recent research, applying a modified form of the model of Gordon.

But before doing so, and as a transition passage to the next section, we summarize some conditions found relevant to the question of acculturation/assimilation in recent research. These will then also represent helpful suggestions for what to look for in reading 1 Peter.

Outlook: Important Variables for Social Relationships

Several variables and options are important in considering the relation of a minority group to its context. These may be arranged in three groups termed a) social and geographical locations; b) social structures, and c) attitudinal conditions.

a) Social and Geographical Locations

Modern studies have proved that people located at the upper social level is more easily assimilated than those below. When social mobility is not an option, acculturation/assimilation is also rather slow. Furthermore, the size of the minority group concerned is important, and the distribution of power and/or the power available to them counts a lot.

The geographical localization of a group is important; ghettos are a problem to all forms of acculturation/assimilation. The reservations provided to the American Indians have proved themselves as severe obstacles to their integration. The same condition may be

Immigrants," in *Cross-Cultural Adaptation. Current Approaches*, eds. Young Yun Kim and William B. Gudykunst (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1988), 65–66.

⁴⁷ A study of the Punjabi Sikhs in an American High School provides interesting parallels to many of the options available to the Christians of the first century CE: Margaret A. Gibson, *Accommodation Without Assimilation. Sikh Immigrants in an American High School* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University press, 1988).

postulated if the ethnic density in a neighborhood is great even if it should not be characterized as a ghetto. Finally, so far, both the degree and quality of contact of the minority members with the majority group(s) is crucial to their possibility of adaptation, integration or assimilation.

b) *Social Structures*

The question of language is important, and so is religion. Furthermore, the kind(s) of and pluralities of cultures involved are important. Adaptation to a multicultural context may be quite different compared to a minority's integration into a monocultural majority. The minority's own social institutions and form of inner organization may also be proposed as crucial; closely related to this will also be the minority's access to societal rewards and resources.

c) *Attitudinal Conditions*

Of primary importance here would be the members of the minority groups own attitudes to the question of how to adapt to society at large. The levels of loyalty to one's ethnic background may here be diverse, and if no common ethnicity is involved, the question might be even more crucial. If acculturation/assimilation is imposed by the majority we may have a different situation than if it is wanted, but opposed by the majority group(s). Furthermore; what is the degree of conflict present? This aspect contains both the kind of possible or present conflict perceived by the minority, and the degree of real conflict imposed by the majority culture.

Such a list is not exhaustive, but to be considered as representative and suggestive. In studying societal relations in the New Testament world, any model should also be outfitted with First Century values and social structures as, e.g., honor and shame, dyadic personality structures and patron-client structures.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*; Jerome H.

Acculturation/Assimilation in 1 Peter

There is a vast span of time, and a great difference in types between the western Euro-American cultures and that of 1 Peter. It may thus seem strange to apply models from recent cultures to the ancient Mediterranean. There are, however, several social aspects that might encourage such a use. When there are majority and minority groups within a culture there will also be borders or frontiers, borderline persons, and some who cross the borderline; the latter might be called apostates by those they leave, and converts by the receivers. The aspect of border can, furthermore, be considered according to several dimensions: E.g., spatial dimension, represented by geographical frontiers; temporal dimension, e.g., having nighttime as a frontier; and there is a social dimension, to be described as "the transitional boundary between major social forms."⁴⁹ Minority groups as Jews and Christians had more or less detectable frontiers and borderlines. For the Jews, the purity rules of their Hebrew Bible functioned as rules defining their borders, for the Christians there were other purity conceptions, hence other rules.⁵⁰ Persons leaving a group for another can be described as emigrants and immigrants. Philo of Alexandria describes this very illustratively when he characterizes the proselytes as persons who have "joined the new and godly commonwealth . . .; they have left their country, their kinsfolk and their friends for the sake of virtue and religion. Let them not be denied another citizenship or other ties of family and friendship, and let them find places of shelter ready for refugees to the camp of

Neyrey, ed., *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991); Torrey Seland, "Mediterranean Cultures and Studies of the New Testament World. Some Problems and Prospects in Recent Research," *Tidsskrift for Kirke, Religion og Samfunn* 5 (1992): 75–90.

⁴⁹ C.B. Little and Chr.B. Sheffield, "Frontiers and Criminal Justice: English Private Prosecution Societies and American Vigilantism in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *American Sociological Review* 48 (1983).

⁵⁰ On the functions of purity rules, see M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, reprint, 1966 (London, 1985).

piety” (Spec. 1:51–52).⁵¹ Hence the use of categories of migration is not primarily a modern application of terms, but one firmly rooted in the emic understanding of the ancient Mediterraneans themselves.

Acculturation/Assimilation as Socializing into the Christian System

One initial question here could be: what culture is the primary to the author? If acculturation/assimilation is the issue in 1 Peter; then one might ask: acculturation/assimilation into what culture? My answer to this question—a question much overlooked—is that the author’s primary intention with his letter is to help and thus promote the readers’ socialization, hence acculturation/assimilation, into the (still developing) Christian system of cult, beliefs, ethos and symbols. This view can be substantiated by the following observations: the readers were most probably considered as first-generation Christians; their social-ethnic identity was primarily Graeco-Roman and non-Jewish; and their social identity as Christians was precarious, as demonstrated by their social location as παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους. Let me elaborate a little on these issues:

a) *The Readers as First-generation Christians*

We would have an important argument for the readers as first-generation Christians if we could be sure that the letter was written by Peter, the Apostle; that would date the letter in the time before ca. 64 CE. This position is still upheld by some scholars. It is, however, a minority position.⁵² But even if the letter should have been written, say in the 70s or 80s, as is the majority opinion today, the readers could still have been considered by the author to be first

⁵¹ See also Spec. 4,178; Virt. 102f; 181f and 219f; cf. Segal, A.F., “The Costs of Proselytism and Conversion.”

⁵² Among those adhering to a Petrine authorship, are Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 7–38; Unnik, W.C. van, “The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter,” 84; Ralph P. Martin, *New Testament Foundations. A Guide for Christian Students Vol. Two: Acts-Revelation* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 330–35; Carsten P. Thiede, *Simon Peter. From Galilee to Rome* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1986), 173–84.

generation Christians, still in need of further acculturation/assimilation into the Christian system.⁵³ Several aspects in the text, in fact, sustain such a view: In 1 Peter 1:14 they are exhorted not to be conform with their former ways of life (μὴ συσχηματιζόμενοι ταῖς πρότερον ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν ἐπιθυμίαις); they have been called out of darkness into the light of God (2:9), a typical characterization of Jewish proselytes and Christian converts, and they were once as sheep going astray (2:25). And lastly, 4:3 states that their contemporary Gentiles were astonished that they no more joined them in their way of living. All this demonstrate that the author considered his readers to be first-generation Christians. S.R. Bechtler has applied Victor Turner's model of liminality to understand these aspects of the life of the first Christians as perceived in 1 Peter.⁵⁴ Bechtler finds the readers to be perceived as being in a temporal liminal state between the present time and the eschaton, but also in a state of social liminality: "in response to its addressees' socially liminal situation as members of religious minority communities within a hostile society, 1 Peter offers them a liminal identity constructed by various metaphors of marginality, social-structural inferiority, process, and/or transition."⁵⁵ This situation of liminality Bechtler finds evidenced in the terms of πάροις and παρεπίδεμοις, but also in several other terms he considers as metaphors, as 'children', 'newborn babies', and the authors use of terms related to slavery.⁵⁶

b) *Their Social-ethnic Identity*

The author of 1 Peter does not explicitly say so, but most probably he considered the readers to be of Gentile background. There might have been some of a Jewish background, but they are nowhere singled out as such as, e.g., in Paul's letter to the Romans.

⁵³ Unnik goes so far as to state that the readers may have been newly baptized; that might be to say too much; see Unnik, W.C. van, "The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter," 91.

⁵⁴ Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 109–78.

⁵⁵ Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 154.

⁵⁶ Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 135–56.

This aspect is, in fact, somewhat of a riddle. The Jews are nowhere incontestably mentioned—nor even alluded to—in the text; not even once. On the one hand; there are, admittedly, several characterizations of identity taken over from the Hebrew Bible: in the introduction, e.g., the readers are characterized as the chosen ones, living in the Diaspora. Both of these expressions are quite Jewish, well known in their writings. Furthermore, in 2:5–9,⁵⁷ they are described with terms taken from the Torah and the Prophets; terms which there specify the prerogatives of the Jews in their relation to YHWH (Jes 28:16; Exod 19:5f). The author's silence about the Jews, and his general and unproblematized use of such legitimating terms from their Hebrew Bible, might suggest that he is writing to Jews or that he considers the Christians to be the real Jews or former proselytes.

There are, however, some aspects in the texts that make the first suggestion dubious; in 1:18 he mentions their former empty life as something inherited from their fathers,⁵⁸ and in 4:2–3 their former life is described as characterized by Gentile ways of life, including idolatry. Both of these characterizations would hardly have been felt appropriate if the author considered the readers to be of Jewish background. Hence most commentators today consider the readers to be of Gentile background, possibly with some Jews involved.⁵⁹ I am rather of the opinion that the readers are envisaged as of primarily Gentile background; if there were some Jews, we do not know. Being of Gentile background, they were in an even greater need for acculturation/assimilation to the Christian system than if they had been Jewish.

⁵⁷ Elliott, *The Elect*; Fiorenza, *Priester Für Gott*.

⁵⁸ An expression that may also denote idolatry; see W.C. van Unnik, "The Critique of Paganism in 1 Peter 1:18," in *Neotestamentica et Semitica. Studies in Honour of Matthew Black*, eds. E. Earle Ellis and Max Wilcox (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1969), 129–42.

⁵⁹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 50–51; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 94–97.

c) *Their Precarious Social Location as Expressed by παροίκοις καὶ παρεπιδήμοις*

The author characterizes the readers as aliens and exiles (2:11: παροίκοις καὶ παρεπιδήμοις, cf. 1:1 and 1:17. What is the meaning of these terms? The expressions have been the object of much scholarly discussion. I have dealt with them in another study;⁶⁰ hence I only summarize my view here. I do think John H. Elliott is correct in not seeing much reference here to a heavenly citizenship; they are not primarily characterizations of the readers as pilgrims, having heaven as their destination.⁶¹ They point much more to a social reality of alienation and strangeness. On the other hand, Elliott overinterprets the social connotations of the terms when he states that it is inherent that the readers are envisaged as being strangers and aliens even before they became Christians.⁶² I find it much more probable that their status as strangers and aliens are due to their status in society as Christians, and that the expressions are to be considered as proselyte language. Philo's characterizations of proselytes come very close; even though he does not use the exact phrases, the reality is there. This is especially evident when Philo describes proselytes as 'refugees' (ἀυτομολουσι; Spec. 1,52); 'incomers' (ἐπηλύτας; Virt. 102); and as leaving "their kinsfolk by blood, their country, their customs and images of their gods, and the tributes and honors paid to them" (Virt. 102). Hence these descriptions in 1 Peter locate the readers among those considered being aliens and exiles because of their status as Christians, and because of that, they are in dire need of further acculturation/assimilation into the Christian social world, i.e., its ideology and symbols.

Taken together, these aspects all enforce the impression that, to

⁶⁰ See the chapter above on "Paroikois kai Parepidemois: Proselyte characterizations in 1 Peter?"

⁶¹ Admittedly, the author might very well have held a pilgrim ideology; it might even be present in his statement that the readers are only to be strangers and aliens for a certain time (1:17). But heavenly pilgrimage is not the primary meaning of the terms here.

⁶² See Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 29–49.

the author, the readers were first generation Christian “proselytes”, suffering from an estrangement in their societies. Hence, they were considered to be in need of further socialization into the meaning and consequences of being Christians. That’s the primary purpose of the letter as it was written in form of paraenesis and consolidating witnesses (5:12).⁶³

This is an important aspect to keep in mind when reading the letter, looking for its argued relationships to the Graeco-Roman society at large. The relation to the Graeco-Roman culture is not its primary focus and intention. The author rather wanted to acculturate/assimilate the readers further into their relationship with God and their fellow-Christians. But, and that has to be stated as well, any such intentions also have consequences for the readers’ relations to the very societies they live in.⁶⁴ The 1 Letter of Peter is very practical, perhaps more than most of the other letters in the New Testament: It is written to confirm and strengthen the Christians. But that is not possible without also considering their societal relations. Hence we might very well ask further: what are the argued relations of these early Christian groups to the Graeco-Roman society at large? This is the issue to be dealt with in the next section.

(Re)acculturation/assimilation to the Graeco-Roman World

The intention of 1 Peter was, as described above, that of acculturating the readers to the Christian system of cult, beliefs, ethos and symbols. The readers were then, before they became Christians, most probably well integrated into the Graeco-Roman culture as they belonged to that culture by birth.⁶⁵ It may sound like a play on words,

⁶³ Cf. here also Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 118.

⁶⁴ Unnik, W.C. van, “The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter”; Unnik, W.C. van, “Christianity According to 1 Peter”; C. Freeman Sleeper, “Political Responsibility According to 1 Peter,” *Novum Testamentum* 10 (1968): 270–86.

⁶⁵ We do not know if the author presumed, or that the readers in fact were, of a more diverse cultural background. As to the possibility of Jewish background, see above. Hence, for the sake of brevity and clarity we might here use the category Graeco-Roman society.

but taking our point of departure in that observation, one should not proceed with questions about how much did the author intend his readers to be assimilated into that society, but reverse the question: How much did he, by his letter, intend his readers to retain of that culture? Were they as Christians to separate themselves from their former societal relations, perhaps even to the point of marginalization? Or were they to integrate, or assimilate? Proceeding from Berry's model as described above, one might ask about the most radical options first; those of marginalization and separation.

The Marginalization/Separation Options

Berry's model proceeds from two important questions: "Is it considered to be of value to maintain cultural identity and characteristics", and "Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with other groups." If the answers are *NO* to both questions, they reveal an attitude to be termed *marginalization*; if YES to the first, but NO to the second, the result would be *separation*.

The most radical option, that of marginalization, should probably be excluded from the outset. There is nothing in the texts that encourage the readers to withdraw from society. The primary focus of the author is to communicate how to think about their own conditions, especially their sufferings, and to empower them to live on as Christians in their day-to-day life. This is most clearly brought out in the author's references to their relations as citizens under civic authorities, being subject to every human institution (2:13–14), honoring the emperor (2:13–17); and remaining in their status as slaves (2:18ff), wives (3:1–6), or husbands (3:7). These admonitions, especially as they focus on being obedient to the authorities, to pray for the emperor, to remain in marriage even if the spouse was not a Christian, should also rule out the option of separation as one favored by the author.

Then there remain the options of integration (acculturation) and/or assimilation. And one might ask: if the latter; how should assimilation aspects in 1 Peter be described in terms of Gordon's model?

As described above, Gordon works with the following kinds of assimilations; Cultural or behavioral assimilation, which also might be called *acculturation*; structural assimilation, and marital, identificational, attitude receptional, behavior receptional and civic assimilation. A crucial point in his understanding is the relation between the two first, and the consequences of structural assimilation for the appearance of the next: Acculturation is not necessarily followed by the next; it may continue indefinitely, but structural assimilation produces further assimilation: if structural assimilation occurs, the other types will naturally follow. “Structural assimilation, then rather than acculturation, is seen to be the keystone of the arch of assimilation.”⁶⁶ We shall use these categories as a framework for the further investigation of 1 Peter.

Acculturation: Cultural or Behavioral Assimilation

Acculturation/cultural assimilation concerns the more general attitudes to cultural traits of society, such as dress, appearance, manner, speech pattern etc., i.e., day to day behavior as members of the society they live in. From the outset, those becoming Christians were probably fully acculturated to their city contexts. They were probably not, as Elliott concludes from his investigation of the terms *παροίκους* and *παρεπιδήμιους*, people who were considered strangers even before they became Christians. Hence the question should then rather be: Is there anything in the texts revealing that the author wanted to change some of these traits.

The most relevant text here is 2:11–3:17. There might be a slight “pietistic” hint in 3:3 with regard to clothing, specifically the adorning of wives: “Let not yours be the outward adorning with braiding of hair, decoration of gold, and wearing of fine clothing.” Furthermore, the male readers are exhorted to “live considerately with your wives” (3:7), and not to be hotheaded to neighbors: “Do not return evil for

⁶⁶ Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life. The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*, 81.

evil or reviling for reviling; but on the contrary bless, for to this you have been called.” (3:9). In a society as the Graeco-Roman, so saturated with the values of honor and shame, such an injunction was rather counter-cultural.⁶⁷ The current values induced people to see such challenges as dangerous to their honor ranking; hence they needed to respond adequately as to retain or enhance their honor. A weak or avoiding attitude was considered shameful and disgracing.

The language of the recipients of 1 Peter was Greek; parallels from other Diaspora Jewish contexts as, e.g., Alexandria, suggest that even in Jewish circles Greek was the primary language. The language of the quotations from the Hebrew Bible in 1 Peter is also that of the Greek translation Septuagint (LXX), and thus probably not translated by the author directly from a Hebrew “Grundlage.”⁶⁸ While at a later stage there was a tendency among the Diaspora Jews to return to Hebrew,⁶⁹ no such tendencies are to be found among the early Christians; their version of the Hebrew Bible was from the beginning the Greek version(s). The Christians remained acculturated to their Graeco-Roman context with regard to language.

There is not much more about what we might call acculturation or behavioral assimilation. As the readers were expected to remain in the society of their neighborhood, and not to be marginalized, they were to retain the general behavior of that culture as long as it did not contradict the Gospel, the new life they were born into (1:3). They were to live “honorably among the Gentiles” (2:12). But there

⁶⁷ For the general model of honour and shame, see Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*; Halvor Moxnes, “Honor and Shame,” *Bulletin of Biblical Theology* 23 (1993): 167–76. For honour and shame in 1 Peter, see Elliott, “Disgraced Yet Graced: The Gospel According to 1 Peter in the Key of Honor and Shame” and Campbell, *Honor, Shame and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*.

⁶⁸ Cf R.N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids, 1975).

⁶⁹ See Per Beskow, “Judendom och kristendom i de östliga provinserna under det tredje århundradet,” in *Judendom och kristendom under de första århundradena*. Vol. 2, Nordiskt Patristikerprojekt 1982–85, eds. Per et al. Beskow (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1986), 125–32.

were also something new in process. This is evident in their partly new code of honor and shame: their ultimate source of honor was now to be found in Christ and God the Father, not in the assessment of their neighbors: “if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but under that name let him glorify God” (4:16). This perspective is crucial also for the other aspects of assimilation possible, as will be demonstrated below.

The level of acculturation could be characterized as high, but with some modifications; it is a modified acculturation where the obedience to Christ has become the primary value of life (1:22; 2:16).

Structural Assimilation

Structural assimilation relates to the attitudes taken to social phenomena such as entrance into cliques, clubs, and institutions of the host society. Related to this will also be the social and geographical locations of the readers.

There is not much to find in 1 Peter of how the author considered the social and geographical locations of the readers. There are some hints, however, and we might offer some further suggestions from what we know about the kind of society here concerned, i.e., the so-called pre-industrial city.⁷⁰ This type was characterized by a very steep social pyramidal structure; a few rich at the top, no clear-cut middle-class, and many in the lower segments. The few rich and powerful, the elites, were composed of those belonging to the emperor’s house (Phil 4:22), the senators and the knights, comprising about 1–5 percent of the population of the Empire. The non-elites were all the other, from the rich merchants to the beggars and outcasts. Justin Meggitt⁷¹ has in his recent study, *Paul, Poverty and*

⁷⁰ Gideon Sjöberg, *The Preindustrial City. Past and Present*, reprint, 1960 (New York: The Free Press); Richard L. Rohrbaugh, “The City in the Second Testament,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 21 (1991): 67–75.

⁷¹ Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*, Studies of the New Testament and Its World (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998).

Survival, demonstrated the pervasiveness of poverty among people in the first-century CE Mediterranean societies. The author of 1 Peter presumes that some of his readers are slaves (2:8ff); 3:3 about adorning might point to some of a rather rich standing, but not necessarily so. Furthermore, no one is considered to have a leading position in society; the letter focuses much more on the aspect of obedience and submission (2:3–17). Inherent in the social situation of the non-elites was also the fact that the possibilities for social mobility were scarce, and in fact available only to a very few. The availability of money was compatible with the availability of power and vice versa. The distribution of power favored those already rich; rich men were powerful, poor men were powerless.

Studies of migration as those presented above demonstrate that the distribution of wealth and power were crucial to possibilities of acculturation and assimilation. The rich immigrants were much more easily acculturated, and further assimilated into their host communities than the poor. The conservatism and low assimilation of the poor were not always due to their disinterest, but to their low availability of resources needed for further integration. How this might have influenced their acculturation into the Christian social world is hard to say; it may be speculated, however, that it did not encourage re-assimilation into non-Christian contexts if once familiarized with the Christian love and charity towards their own (cf. here the emphasis on the brotherly love in 1 Peter 1:22; 3:8; 4:8–10).

The geographical location of the immigrants, the size of their communities, the plurality of cultures embedded in the majority parts of the host society and the degree and quality of contact have also proven crucial to acculturation and assimilation.

In the pre-industrial cities people might be located according to ethnicity, but we also know about areas populated according to profession. Philo states that in Alexandria most of the Jews lived in two of the five deltas of the city (Flacc. 55), but there was nothing compared to the later ghettos of the middle ages and modern times. As we might suggest that the Christians receiving 1 Peter most probably were composed of people from various ethnic and geographical

parts of Minor Asia, we should not find it unnatural that this aspect is not dealt with in the letter. The possible social structures of the Christian communities we shall deal with below.

1 Peter also presupposes that the Christians remained in their social-structural locations: if not, its exhortations to those in slavery, or to those married to non-Christians would be pointless (2:18–3,6). Close contact with their former co-religionists was thus unavoidable to many; the quality of such contact might be more diverse. In fact, 4:2–4 is prime evidence of the possible harassment involved in such contact. Hence the author exhorts his readers to always be prepared to defend themselves, their lives and faith (3:15), doing good works that might make their neighbors more receptive to their presence and message.

W.C. van Unnik and B.W. Winter have, however, drawn some wider conclusions from the arguments about good works in the letter. Unnik⁷² is of the opinion that as it is said that the ἀγαθοποιοί are praised (2:12), this may have a more specific meaning; it may point to special honor lists where εὐεργέται are praised for their work for the community. Such benefactors were often honored by tablets in the market-place extolling the great services they had rendered to the city. Winther has carried this argument somewhat further.⁷³ He surmises that Jeremiah 29:7 (“seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf”), may have been central to these first Christians, motivating them to perform good works for the benefit of the city.

Benefactors were an important feature of that society, but it remains to be proven that 1 Peter in fact encourage the Christians to be such benefactors. According to my reading, the texts are too ambiguous

⁷² Unnik, W.C. van, “The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter,” 93.

⁷³ See Bruce W. Winter, “The Public Honouring of Christian Benefactors. Romans 13.3–4 and 1 Peter. 2.14–15,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 34 (1988): 87–103. Now also published in his *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens*, First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1994), 25–40, cf. pp. 11–23.

to bear such an interpretation, and it would presume that the author considered all the Christians to have the resources for such benefactions. Winter is generalizing about the readers. In fact, it was only members of the elite that could afford such duties.

Furthermore, if the persecutions were local, sporadic, and mainly in form of abuse and discrimination (see below), it is probable that the good works denoted the daily life of the Christians, not public work of duties as benefactors, resulting in statues and tablets in the market-places. The interpretation of van Unnik, arguing that the authorities are meant as those observing the good works is not necessary; the characterization in 2:15 (ὅτι οὕτως ἐστὶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ ἀγαθοποιούντας φιμοῦν τὴν τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνωσίαν), might as well be meant more general. Winter stretches his arguments even more, but the Christians' preference of Jeremiah 29:7 is without any foothold in the texts; that passage is never quoted nor alluded to in the New Testament. Hence it is not very useful as argument for the Christians as benefactors for the cities.

An important part of the social life in Diaspora was the many clubs and associations.⁷⁴ How was the supposed attitude to these institutions? Elliott⁷⁵ surmises that former connections with the guilds and various clubs associated with trades might have been a source for some of the troubles presumed by the author. Such clubs and associations were not trade guilds or unions as our labor unions of today; some had comparable goals, others aimed at being able to provide a decent funeral for its members when that was needed, and convivial matters were central to them all. The internal organization of the clubs and associations, especially in the Greek cities, had the polis as its structural model; they had a structured leadership and laws regulating activities, duties, and responsibilities. In this way, people who had little influence in their polis could find a setting where they were acknowledged. Club membership gave a feeling of

⁷⁴ E. Ziebarth, *Das griechische Vereinswesen* (Leipzig, 1896); F. Poland, *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens* (Leipzig, 1909).

⁷⁵ Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 70.180–81.

belonging. Hence, whether the ostensible purposes of the clubs were convivial, political, or economic, most often these features were intertwined. Clubs also had social functions; and they represented a part of the general *paideia*. This aspect is most evident in the clubs of the young people that were associated with their educational and *gymnasial* settings, but is probably to be considered as inherent in the others too.⁷⁶

Such clubs and associations were considered as politically suspect by the emperor, and their convivial excesses were well known. A writer such as Philo of Alexandria was highly skeptical of them, considering them as milieus for apostasy.⁷⁷ The statements of 1 Peter in 4:3–4 may very well have some of their background in the club activities, and the writer exhorts the readers to be no more involved in such settings: “Let the time that is past suffice for doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in drunkenness, revels, carousing and lawless idolatry. They are surprised that you do not now join them in the same wild profligacy, and they abuse you.” Considering the pervasiveness of such institutions it is no wonder if the non-Christians noticed with some contempt the withdrawal of the Christians, especially as they also might discover that they established their own communal settings⁷⁸ (see below on identificational assimilation).

Structural assimilation is crucial for the identity of minority groups; we have pointed out aspects demonstrating that the life of the Christians as argued in 1 Peter should be ranked low with regard to structural assimilation. Hence, according to Gordons model, the other forms of assimilation could be present, but not necessarily so.

⁷⁶ Seland, “Philo and the Clubs and Associations of Alexandria,” 112.

⁷⁷ Seland, “Philo and the Clubs and Associations of Alexandria.”

⁷⁸ Philip A. Harland has, however, argued in his recent dissertation that the associations played a much more positive role for the early Christians in their ways of relating to the world at large. See Philip A. Harland, “Honouring the Emperor or Assailing the Beast: Participation in Civic Life Among Associations (Jewish, Christian and Other) in Asia Minor and the Apocalypse of John,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 77 (2000): 99–121, and Harland, *Associations, Synagogues and Congregations*.

Marital Assimilation

The author probably presumes that some, perhaps most of the Christians were married as most people married at a very young age in that culture. In 3:1–6 he also presumes that some women had non-Christian husbands. The wives are not advised to break out of such a marriage, but to be submissive, hoping that the unbelieving husbands might be won, if not by word, then by the behavior of their wives. Balch reads the household codes of 2:13ff as conservative exhortations, exhibiting an attitude he considers apologetic with regard to the authorities, and hence as assimilating to the general society.⁷⁹ I agree with Elliott that it is wrong to determine the general attitude of the author from the household-codes alone,⁸⁰ and he is probably also right in his assessment of their function when he pinpoints that they should be read in light of the overall strategy of the letter. Hence marital assimilation should be considered low in the author's argumentation; such marriages should not necessarily be broken, but they are not without problems; Christian life and witness are important.

Identificational Assimilation

A pivotal issue for the question of assimilation for all kinds of immigrants is the question of group identity, and to what degree they are able to uphold this in their contexts. In 1 Peter we can see these aspects both in the ways the author depicts the basis for his paraenesis, and the more explicit sayings about the nature of the Christian communities.

Living in a pluralistic society, the author of 1 Peter is rather resolute about the basis of his paraenesis. Much of the concrete exhortations and advice are comparable to parallel traditions in Graeco-Roman works, except for one central part; the motivations and legitimations. The point of reference for the author's values is clearly set forth,

⁷⁹ Balch, D.L., *Let Wives be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*; Balch, David L., "Household Codes."

⁸⁰ Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 110–12. 215–20.

showing his primary source of loyalty. As “chosen and destined by God the Father” (1:1), the Christians are admonished to be holy, because God is holy (1:16, drawing on Lev 11:44,45; 19:2; 20:7); they are to be subject to human institutions for the Lord’s sake (2:13; διὰ τὸν κύριον); it is a part of their call to not suffer as evildoers (2:21); Christ is set forth as an example; 2:12; 2:21; 4:1,⁸¹ and some exhortations are given with reference to the apocalyptic reality of the proximity of the end (1:6; 2:12; 4:7 4:17–19; 5:8).

Many investigations of migration and social identity point out the importance of social structures for the issues of acculturation/assimilation. Karmela Liebkind structures the various levels of social consciousness and their importance for group identity and cohesion thus: Level one consists of “an awareness and feeling of belonging to a group, i.e., identification. On Level 2 “conceptions of the nature of one’s group is formed”; on Level 3 specific strategies and demands are formulated to achieve the ends defined on the previous level, i.e., strategies for “political” actions.⁸² With regard to the need for organizational structures, she emphasizes that “For minority groups, an organization or a center which can support the group’s identity acts as a crucial source for institutional cultural affirmation. . . . Institutional cultural support seems to be a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for achieving a positive minority identity.”⁸³ Hence, looking for aspects of identificational assimilation in 1 Peter, it should be relevant to look for the group structures implicitly and explicitly argued for in the letter, and the attitudes to parallel structures in the society at large.

Though the term ἐκκλησία is lacking, 1 Peter abounds in group-ideology promoting characterizations, and it obviously also presumes

⁸¹ E. Lohse, “Paranese und Kerygma im 1 Petrusbrief,” *Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 45 (1954): 86–89.

⁸² K. Liebkind, *The Social Psychology of Minority Identity. A Case Study of Intergroup Identification, Theoretical Refinement and Methodological Experimentation. 2 Revised Edition* (Helsinki, 1979), 14.

⁸³ Liebkind, *The Social Psychology of Minority Identity. A Case Study of Intergroup Identification, Theoretical Refinement and Methodological Experimentation. 2 Revised Edition*, 31.

the existence of some form of group structures among its readers.⁸⁴ The readers are characterized as “chosen” (1:1.3.4; cf. 2:4–9); “beloved” (2:11); “obedient children” (2:14), and they are given the name “Christians” (4:16). For the first time the term “race” (γένος, 2:9) is applied to the Christians, a term much more prominent in the 2. century CE; and it is said that “Once you were no people (λαός), but now you are God’s people” (2:10). Most of these terms are taken from the descriptions of Israel in the Hebrew Bible, hence they strengthen the feelings of belonging to a new group, perhaps understood as the new or restored Israel. A term like “brotherhood” (ἀδελφότης, 2:17; 5:9) is group affirming too. Furthermore, the readers are exhorted to love one another (3:8), to serve one another (4:10), and willingly offer hospitality to one another (4:9). Both their status as Christians, and their present lives are rooted in the christology; Christ is the one who ransomed them from “the futile life inherited from their fathers” (1:18), as well as being the paradigm for their lives (2:21ff).

Such terms and descriptions are not to be considered as theological descriptions only; they also have important social significances: they provide an awareness and feeling of belonging to a group, i.e., identity, and are pivotal in forming an understanding of the nature of one’s group. Descriptions of the “before and now” conditions of the readers (cf. 1:14), and the author’s pinpointing of situations of “us” and “them”, cf. 4:3–4,⁸⁵ are also identity forming characterizations.

When it comes to the social, organizational structures of their communities as leadership and community centers, we are far less informed. The author presumes there are “elders” (5:1–5), and exhorts them “to tend the flock not by constraint but willingly”, and to be

⁸⁴ Jürgen Roloff, *Die Kirche im Neuen Testament*, Neue Testament Deutsch, Grundrisse (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 268–78; Horst Goldstein, *Paulinische Gemeinde im Ersten Petrusbrief* (Stuttgart: KBW Verlag, 1975); Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 36–37; Kevin Giles, *What on Earth is the Church? An Exploration in New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 161–68.

⁸⁵ This aspect is also clearly present in the descriptions of the readers in 1:1.17 and 4:11 as παρόικοις and παρεπιδήμοις.

examples for the flock; Christ being the “chief shepherd” (5:4). There is nothing in the letter dealing with places and times of gathering. Considered in light of the other New Testament writings, and the fact that church buildings are not known from this century at all, they probably both were supposed to—and most probably did—gather in private houses.⁸⁶

Focusing thus on their relations to society at large, we do get the impression that the author exhorts the readers to have a fairly clear conception of their own identity as Christians, but they are not encouraged to retract from their societal relations whether geographically nor socially: Goppelt emphasizes that even though they are to consider themselves as the eschatological “Exodus-Gemeinde”, they are not to retract. Their way of behaviour, their ἀναστροφή, a favorite word with the author (1:15; 2:12; 3:1.2.16) is to be good and honorable (καλῶς): “Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles” (2:12).⁸⁷ Hence Goppelt states with regard to the Household codes in 3:1ff, that “Die Weisung richtet sich von Hause aus nicht gegen Rebellion, sondern gegen Emigration.”⁸⁸ This is probably correct when it comes to the households codes, or “Station Codes”, as Goppelt calls them,⁸⁹ but we consider it too one-sided to read the author’s attitude to acculturation and assimilation from these exhortations alone (cf. the Balch-Elliott debate).

The Christians of 1 Peter were under pressures from their society; what attitudes were they to take to the question of mission? Should they retract to a quiet life, or should they be open, active and intruding into the society with activities of preaching and proselytizing?

⁸⁶ E.W. Stegemann and W. Stegemann, *Urchristliche Sozialgeschichte. Die Anfänge im Judentum und die Christuskirchen in der mediterranen Welt* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1995), 239ff; Roger W. Gehring, *Hausgemeinde und Mission. Die Bedeutung antiker Häuser und Hausgemeinschaften—von Jesus bis Paulus, Bibelwissenschaftliche Monographien 9* (Basel: Brunnen Verlag, 2000).

⁸⁷ So the *New Revised Standard Version*; the *Revised Standard Version* has “Maintain good conduct among the Gentiles.”

⁸⁸ L. Goppelt, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments 2. Vielfalt und Einheit des apostolischen Christuszeugnisses* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), 497.

⁸⁹ Goppelt, Leonhard, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 162–79.

These alternatives may be too sharply set. The letter of 1 Peter has been read as exhibiting a “missionary community”,⁹⁰ but they should probably not be considered as missionary communities in our modern-day sense of the word. A more appropriate model is probably to be found in a parallel community form in the Diaspora; the Jewish communities. It has been hotly debated whether the Jews were engaged in missionary activities or not to get proselytes;⁹¹ most probably they were not, but they welcomed those who came, wanting to be received as proselytes. This attitude seems also to be similar to that presumed by the author of 1 Peter; not active mission, but primarily proselytizing by their life. It is correct that the author presumes that there has been missionary preaching in these communities of Asia Minor (1:12.25b), but he nowhere exhorts his readers to carry out public preaching. This may be due to the severe pressure they suffered. His primary suggestion is that they should live such as to win their neighbors by the light and preaching represented by their lives (2:12; 3:1), or, if necessary, engage in an apologia for their hope. Even 2:9 (ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θανμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς·) is perhaps to be interpreted in this way. According to Balch, the verb ἐξαγγέλλω should rather not be understood so much as denoting public praises as praises in worship to God: He argues that “In contexts where ἐξαγγέλλω refers to “proclaiming” the praises, deeds, righteousness, or works of God,

⁹⁰ Valdir R. Steuernagel, “An Exiled Community as a Missionary Community: A Study Based on 1 Peter 2,9.10,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 10 (1986): 8–18.

⁹¹ There is a brief review of this research in my *Paulus i Polis*, 141–44. For further investigations, see McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period*; Martin Goodman, “Jewish Proselytizing in the First Century,” in *The Jews Among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, eds. Judith Lieu, John North, and Tessa Rajak (London: Routledge, 1992), 54–78; Shaye J.D. Cohen, “Was Judaism in Antiquity a Missionary Religion?” in *Jewish Assimilation, Acculturation, and Accommodation: Past Traditions, Current Issues, and Future Prospects*, ed. Menachem Mor, Studies in Jewish Civilization 2. (Lanham Omaha, Neb.: University Press of America Center for the Study of Religion and Society, Creighton University, 1992), 14–23; Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

the proclaiming is always *to God* in worship.”⁹² Hence it is more natural to understand the phrase as denoting praise of God in worship, not public, missionary preaching and kerygmatic proclamation. In fact, according to Balch, there is no reference in the letter to the “task” of all Christians doing missionary preaching. In this latter statement, Balch is followed by Ramsey Michaels.⁹³ Hence the Christians are to live in the society, not trying to expose themselves by preaching in the streets, but bearing witness to the Gospel by their lives. Their identificational assimilation is low, almost non-existent.

Attitude-, Behavior Receptional- and Civic Assimilation

Gordon, in his model, differentiates further between attitude receptional-, behavior receptional-, and civic assimilation as categories dealing with absence/presence of prejudice, discrimination and value and power conflict respectively. Because of the closeness of these categories, and the scarcity of our material we deal with these aspects under one heading.

The trials and suffering facing the readers of 1 Peter is evident on every page of the letter; the interpretation of what kinds of conflicts are here denoted is somewhat more problematic, and has been widely discussed.⁹⁴ The focus has especially been on the possible time and kind of sufferings concerned in light of what we see in other sources. Various periods of time have been suggested, trying to link the troubles to known periods of persecutions. Among these the time of Nero (54–68 CE), Domitianian (81–96), and Trajan (97–117) have been considered most relevant. As we in this study focus particularly

⁹² Balch, *Let Wives*, p. 133.

⁹³ Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, p. 110: “Whether directed to God or to the worshipping community, the “proclamation” involved in the verb ἐξαγγέλλειν belongs in the category of worship, not missionary activity.” See also Coppens, “Le Sacerdoce royal des fidèles: un Commentaire de I Petr., II, 4–10,” 71.

⁹⁴ See the recent work of Molthagen, “Die Lage der Christen im römischen Reich nach dem 1. Petrusbrief. Zum Problem einer Domitianischen Verfolgung.” See further Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 52–56; Goppelt, Leonhard, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 38–45; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 28–36.

on the kind of sufferings *as argued* by the author, the exact date might be of less interest than their presumed nature.

According to the writer of 1 Peter there seems to be no easy way of life for the readers as Christians. He presumes that they are suffering various forms of trials, but due to the eschatological fact of the parousia, there is a limit set (1:6; ὀλίγον ἄρτι εἰ δέον ἐστὶν λυπηθέντες ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς, cf. 6:10; 4:7; 5:4).⁹⁵ They are not only spoken against (2:12; 3:16), but also reviled (λοιδορία, 3:9), abused (βλασφημέω, 4:4), reproached (ὀνειδίζω, 4:14), and they suffer a fiery ordeal (πυρώσει πρὸς πειρασμὸν; 4:12). Theologically, the devil is also engaged in inflicting these sufferings (5:9; he is the ἀντίδικος). Special attention is often given to 3:13–17 and 4:15ff; to some modern readers they denote some kind of context of jurisprudence, i.e., some kind of court procedures, and some see here the same kind of procedures as that witnessed in Pliny's letter to Trajan.⁹⁶ Some warnings against being accused in court may be raised here by the author (3:15; ἔτοιμοι ἀεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογία πάντῃ τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος,); the Christians are especially to be aware of not being charged with general criminal acts (4:15–16: μὴ γάρ τις ὑμῶν πασχέτω ὡς φονεὺς ἢ κλέπτης ἢ κακοποιὸς ἢ ὡς ἄλλοτριεπίσκοπος· εἰ δεὼς Χριστιανός, μὴ αἰσχυνέσθω, δοξαζέτω δὲ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ). But whether this is written on the background of cases known to the author or not, is improvable.

The cumulative impression of these “persecution” texts is, nevertheless, that the conditions of these Christians were rather arduous and transparent. They reveal that there was a lot of prejudices and discrimination in vogue; as to the question of assimilations dealt with here, they should be characterized as rather low, close to nothing (cf. also 4:1–4).

⁹⁵ Contra David C. Parker, “The Eschatology of 1 Peter,” *Bulletin of Biblical Theology* 24 (1994): 27–32, who does not find much eschatology in 1 Peter. For a better assessment, see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 68ff.

⁹⁶ Molthagen, “Die Lage der Christen im römischen Reich nach dem 1. Petrusbrief. Zum Problem einer Domitianischen Verfolgung,” 444ff.

Conclusions

In the first section we saw that scholars using the categories acculturation and assimilation did not endeavor to present any elaborated definitions of these terms. Accordingly, there was also some confusion in their use of the terms, especially when some of their works were compared. J.M.G. Barclay has perhaps presented the most comprehensive effort of defining his terms. They were nevertheless found to be somewhat ambiguous, and not very much influenced by the use of the same terms in relevant social science studies.

In the second main section, we dealt with some trends in recent social science studies of acculturation and assimilation. Such studies have mainly focused on the phenomena of migration, but in recent years there has been a tendency to shift the focus from migration to present-day multicultural societies. Among the various models available, we focused on the models of Gordon and Berry.

The third and last section dealt with the issues of acculturation/assimilation in the 1 letter of Peter. Here we found it necessary to emphasize that the main focus of 1 Peter was not the question of acculturation/assimilation into the Graeco-Roman society, but its primary strategy was to improve on the readers' socialization in the Christian system of beliefs, ethos and cult. But as this necessarily also involves one's relations to society at large, we applied Gordon's model in order to assess these issues.

Generally speaking, this points out to us that in terms of acculturation or cultural assimilation to the Graeco-Roman world, the author of 1 Peter argue for a rather high acculturation, but with some modifications; it is a modified acculturation where the obedience to Christ is the primary value of life.

As to structural assimilation, which concerns the Christians' relations to the various institutions of society, we found a rather low form of assimilation. With regard to marital assimilation, the author does not exhort to leave an unbelieving spouse, but to try to be a witness in order to maybe win the partner for Christ, hence to be characterized as a modified assimilation. Identificational assimilation was,

in the arguments of the author, found to be very low; the readers' primary source of identity was supposed to be based on their relations to Christ by faith and baptism.

1 Peter abounds in sayings about suffering and various kinds of local discrimination and harassment. Accordingly, their attitude-, behavioral relational- and civic assimilation was to be characterized as very low, close to non-existent. Read in light of the values of honor and shame, it should probably not be overlooked that the author exhorts his readers to live honorably among the Gentiles. But at the same time; living as called into the marvelous light of God, the source of honor ranking has been somewhat changed, having its center in God and his son Jesus Christ.

EPILOGUE

‘Darkness’ and ‘light’ are well known categories often used in descriptions of the ‘then’ and ‘now’ conditions of those undergoing the shift we may call conversion. We find them used in this way both in Jewish and Christian sources dealing with apostates and converts as well as in works from several other religions and cultures.

‘Strangers in the Light.’ It is argued here that this is a fitting characterization of the early Christians as presented in 1 Peter. They were considered strangers and resident aliens’ (1:1.20; 2:10), and said to be called out of the darkness into the marvellous light of God (2:9). In this present volume we have presented studies of some of the aspects inherent in such descriptions.

The 1 letter of Peter challenges, and many unanswered questions sometimes cause confusion. Two of the unanswered are the identity of its first readers and its real author. But these issues have not been the primary focus in the preceding pages. What we do know is the author’s explicit and implicit characterizations of and arguments to the readers. This is what we have tried to interpret and understand.

The conclusions at the end of each chapter sums up our results, but some points may be reiterated and emphasized here: In light of ancient Graeco-Roman practice of letter-writing in general, and of 1 Peter 1:1; 5:12 in particular, we found Silvanus to be the plausible writer/secretary of the letter. Neither 5:12, nor the listing of the provinces in 1:1 compels us to consider him the courier of the letter. The vast regions of destination make it even less than plausible.

The descriptions *πάροικος* and *παρεπιδήμιος* have been much discussed; one aspect not very much discussed is their possible role as proselyte descriptions. I do not, however, consider all the readers to have been former proselytes, but Diaspora Jewish descriptions of proselytes should be considered important in order to understand

the social world of the early Christians, and the social implications of these terms as used in 1 Peter.

The third and fourth chapters represent a special kind of exercise in interpretation and hermeneutics. Dealing with the issue of 'common priesthood' in 1 Peter, and the issues set forth in 2:11 they try to read 1 Peter in light of a Philonic symbolic universe. The view worked out might be interesting for understanding both Philo and 1 Peter.

The fifth and last chapter is closely associated with the above mentioned; the issues of assimilation and acculturation are found to be important in the arguments of 1 Peter concerning their social life as minorities in a partly unfriendly world. The author does not argue a general assimilation to their Graeco-Roman social world, but argue a modified acculturation where obedience to Christ is the primary value of life.

The answers given in the present study to some of the challenges of 1 Peter are given for further pondering and scholarly discussion. They all underline a major aspect: the 1 letter of Peter should be read in light of its social location in the Diaspora. This is not a new and revolutionizing view, but the focus on the social world of the Diaspora Jews, including Philo of Alexandria, has not always been appropriately observed. The debate has to continue. The works of Philo have often been used as sources for understanding particular terms and ideological issues in New Testament writings. But his works should also be used in order to illuminate the social conditions of the first Christians. The present study tries to be aware of the value of Philo's works for both these interests.

'Strangers in the Light.' This is both a characterization and a challenge; a characterization of the intended audience in "Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia" (1:1), and a challenge to its readers of all times and places. In this the hermeneutical issues raised by this brief, but fascinating writing of the New Testament prevail.

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